





HORACE GRANTHAM.

VOL. II.

HORACE GRANTHAM;

OR,

THE NEGLECTED SON.

BY

CHARLES HORROCKS, ESQ.,

LATE CAPTAIN H.M. 15TH REGIMENT.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

LONDON:

WILLIAM SHOBERL, PUBLISHER,

20, GREAT MARLBOROUGH STREET.

1852.

London :
Myers & Co., Printers, 22, Tavistock-street, Covent Garden.

823
H 7884
V. 2

HORACE GRANTHAM.

CHAPTER I.

THE following day, Madame Le Clerc and Amy Cecil rose with the early dawn. It was one of those delicious mornings which frequently occur at this season of the year in mountainous districts; and, as the lovely girl threw open her window and gazed upon the scene, her heart expanded with a holy joy; a calm sensation of mingled gratitude and reverence to the great Author of the magnificent works she beheld.

The sun had just risen. A thick white mist was yet hanging in the valleys beneath, or, collecting itself in masses, was ascending slowly towards the blue sky, dissolving itself as it rose in the balmy atmosphere.

A herd of cattle was visible near the stream, some lying down, and others standing lazily, half submerged in the water, switching their tails to dislodge the insects that annoyed them; an indication that the day would be excessively hot.

Amy Cecil's thoughts soon wandered from the contemplation of the scene before her, to the expected arrival of her father, brother, and their friend. Her heart bounded with delight, as she pictured to herself the happy meeting, and, though alone, she smiled sweetly, and raised her eyes to Heaven with an expression of grateful hope. Ah! why were those eyes withdrawn quickly? Why, in a moment, did the countenance of the gentle girl undergo a sudden and strange revulsion—why that nervous shake—and why are those bright

orbs now bent upon the ground as if the possessor were buried in an absorbing and painful reverie?.

Because, reader, this young creature, who seemed formed by nature for happiness, rich in beauty, strong in the possession of the health of youth, with a kind heart and noble mind, the objects of her family's devoted care and love, had already paid the penalty attached to our existence, and thus early in life had tasted deeply of the cup of sorrow and disappointment, the recollection of which, at this moment, forced itself upon her, and marred her otherwise happy reflections on the coming day. She sighed deeply and turned from the window, as the old lady entered her apartment.

"Good morning, darling," said she, "breakfast is ready," kissing her affectionately, "I have sent Frederica for the drosky. I propose that we drive to the village and await the arrival of the gentlemen."

"Oh, yes," replied Amy Cecil, returning her friend's salutations warmly, "how kind

of you, for I have been dreaming away my time, and had forgotten all about giving the necessary orders for the carriage! I do not think they will arrive from Salzburg till towards the evening."

"Never mind," rejoined the old lady, "let us go; I have other engagements in the village which will occupy me, and you can take your sketch-book."

"Agreed, my dear Madame!" exclaimed Amy, as she took her friend's arm, and proceeded to the sitting-room, where the morning repast was spread. "Who can this gentleman be, who accompanies your father, my dear?" commenced the old lady, reverting to their conversation on the previous evening.

"Ah!" cried Amy, laughing sily, "how very inquisitive you are! I have barely given the subject a thought."

"How very provoking!" said Madame Le Clerc, slightly nettled, "I have been thinking of him ever since. Mr. Cecil might as well have mentioned his name at least."

“Ha, ha!” responded Amy, laughing, “your curiosity will soon be gratified.”

“I am sure there must be something attractive about him,” persevered the old lady, “or your father would never have asked him to stop at the cottage.”

“I declare,” cried Amy, with a comical air, “that you are prepared to fall in love with him, Madame.”

“Do not quiz me,” returned Madame, smiling, and resuming her habitual dignity, “but let us finish our breakfast: I hear the drosky approaching.”

At this moment, the vehicle drew up at the door. The ladies made a hasty toilet, and, in ten minutes, they were on their way to E—— followed by Hero, who bounded merrily from side to side, as if conscious of his young master’s expected arrival.

“Look at Hero!” said Amy, “he seems to share our happiness. Ah, my dear Madame, what delight can equal the return of beloved friends to us, after an unwilling

separation, however short the time may be!"

"Yes, my love," answered the old lady, gravely, "at your time of life, these sensations are natural, and a glorious privilege which youth commands. I have seen all my dearest friends," continued Madame Le Clerc, and she sighed deeply, "torn from me by the rude hand of death, and am left alone; though, thank Heaven, I am yet able to enjoy, to a certain extent, the feelings you have alluded to, and share, no doubt in a modified degree, your gratification' at the return of your relations."

Amy pressed the old lady's hand, and neither spoke again until they reached the village where the drosky was put up, and Madame Le Clerc took leave of her young friend, who intimated her intention of proceeding to finish a sketch which she had already begun, at a picturesque spot some short distance on the road towards Salzburg.

"Perhaps I shall see them coming," she exclaimed, with a look of joy, as she bade Madame adieu.

"If you wait long enough, my love, you certainly will," was the reply; "take care that your patience be not exhausted."

With these words, they parted. Amy took a little girl from the village with her, as protector and companion, and, in half an hour, she was seated on her camp-stool, with the child at her feet, busily engaged upon her vocation.

"It is now three o'clock," said Amy, in German, looking at her watch, to her attendant. "Do you see that road?"

"Yes, Mademoiselle."

"Then, my dear," continued Amy, patting the little girl's head kindly, "watch, and when you see a carriage approach, tell me quickly."

Thus apostrophized, the child fixed her eyes on the most distant point which was visible, and frequently interrupted Amy with an exclamation, such as—"Here it is!"

—“I see them!” &c. The travellers, however, came not; and Amy was on the point of returning to the village, when the child drew her attention to a cloud of dust which now appeared at the extremity of the road, caused by the motion of a caleche, which rapidly neared the spot where they were seated.

Amy Cecil rose, and stood spell-bound. She felt that this vehicle contained the objects of her anxiety, and her heart palpitated violently. It was an open carriage. She soon descried three gentlemen seated in it, and instantly recognised her father, who occupied the hinder seat.

She waved her handkerchief, and shouted to the best of her ability, to attract their attention to the slight eminence where she stood.

Mr. Cecil looked up, and saw his daughter.

We cannot attempt to describe the expression of his features, when he beheld his child, a sudden ray of light seemed to illumine his countenance, he caught hold of

John by the shoulder, and pointed upwards.

"It is Amy, as I live," cried John Cecil.

"Halt!" roared he to the postilion, who instantly obeyed him.

Of course, Horace's attention was drawn to the object which was the cause of all this commotion. His eyes followed those of Mr. Cecil, and rested upon the figure of the lovely girl, who, in an agitated manner was descending the steep towards the road, assisted by her companion.

In another moment, the steps are let down, and a second afterwards Amy Cecil is in the arms of her father, who pressed her to his heart with fond affection.

"My darling child," said he, as he kissed her for the last time, and released her from his embrace, "God bless you! how happy I am to see you."

Amy could not speak—she was so overcome with her emotions—she embraced her brother, and wiped away the tears of

happiness which flowed from her bright eyes.

"I could not resist the temptation, dearest papa, at last," said she, "to come and look out for you, besides," added she (as if any excuse were necessary for such an act), "I had to finish a sketch on this road, and thought this a most favourable opportunity."

"A glorious one, my love," answered Mr. Cecil, regarding her with looks of the most paternal affection, "it is so like you, Heaven bless you!"

Horace Grantham had remained standing up in the carriage during this interesting scene, his feelings powerfully aroused; for, be it remembered, he was totally unaccustomed to any such displays in his own family, and, although he was well aware that Mr. Cecil loved his daughter dearly, he was not prepared to witness such a glorious example of perfect love, such unbounded affection, and heart-felt joy, as marked the

meeting of his companions with Amy Cecil.

“Horace, my dear fellow,” said Mr. Cecil, with some degree of composure, “you will pardon me, at such a moment for my forgetfulness of your presence. Amy, my love, —my friend, Mr. Horace Grantham—Horace —my daughter!”

Amy now, for the first time, looked up at Horace. Their eyes met, and she bowed slightly, as our hero raised his hat, and returned the movement with that ease and proper politeness, which particularly mark the well-bred Englishman.

Horace Grantham never forgot that moment—his fate was already sealed—prepared as he had been for the last month to witness something far beyond the common on his introduction to Amy, and having permitted his romantic and fiery nature to dwell continually upon the image which he had invested her with, he had not, even in his most happy dreams, conjured an ideal, which could in any way be compared to

the lovely original he now beheld. He collected himself with an effort, for he was himself astonished at the strange effect thus produced upon him, and spoke as follows:—

“Mr. Cecil, I pray you, allow me to walk to the village, and Miss Cecil can occupy my place in the carriage.”

“No, no, my good fellow,” responded Mr. Cecil; sit still, there is plenty of room for Amy by my side.”

“Yes,” cried John, “of course there is. We are not in Hyde Park, thank goodness, and four inside will not shock the worthy inhabitants of E——, I reckon.”

“No,” said Amy, who had taken hold of her father’s arm, “I can sit by papa; there is plenty of room.”

Our hero now jumped into the road, and, in earnest tones, again insisted on walking. However, it would not do; they would not hear of it a moment. They all re-seated themselves, and prepared for a fresh start.

“Stop a moment,” exclaimed Amy, in a voice which thrilled the very soul of Horace,

“where is my little girl — my knight errant ?”

The poor thing had remained unobserved by the way-side, but now came forward, and curtsayed to the gentlefolk.

“What a lovely child!” said Horace — how sweet the expression of her mild blue eyes!”

“They are indeed beautiful,” replied Amy Cecil. “She is a great favourite of mine, and I must not desert her.”

At this moment, the child’s face was observed to brighten suddenly, and she ran off quickly towards a group of peasants who were approaching.

“Ah !” said Amy, “yonder is her mother. She has already joined her, so now I am relieved from any further anxiety.”

“Good,” continued John Cecil ; “now for home!”

The gallant Hero had not been entirely forgotten during the scene related. And now that the first moments were passed, he came in for a considerable share of the affec-

tions of his master, which the noble animal returned in that wonderfully instinctive manner which characterizes his race.

As the carriage started, he madly gambolled round, barking loudly, and thus escorted, they soon reached E——, and found the old lady at the hotel, where she had been awaiting their arrival, and she welcomed them heartily back to home.

They dined at E——, and, in the cool of the evening, entered the drosky, and proceeded to Mr. Cecil's abode, dropping at her cottage the old lady, who, however, promised to be with them early the following day.

Horace was loud in his praises of the magnificent scenery which surrounded them, and the situation of the cottages, and retired to rest that night in a frame of mind at once excited, yet serene; excited, because his head and heart were in a sort of whirl, caused, we imagine, by his first interview with Amy; and serene, owing to the counter

influences impressed upon him by the happy meeting he had witnessed, and the perfect confidence and friendship with which he regarded Mr. Cecil and his son.

CHAPTER II.

HORACE occupied, as our readers have already been informed, the only spare-bedroom in the cottage. It was a small, but airy apartment, and looked out upon the garden. He awoke early, and sprang from his bed, as if anxious not to lose a moment before contemplating the magnificent prospect which he had only (owing to the late hour at which they arrived), half beheld on the previous evening.

He hastily drew on his dressing-gown, and threw open the window, but instantaneously drew back for fear of being observed,

as he descried Miss Cecil walking slowly round the gravel-walk towards a small gate at the furthest extremity of the garden. She had a book in her hand, and advanced slowly, stopping at intervals, and stooping down to pick a flower, or watch the growth of some favourite plant. No vile bonnet nor garden-hat concealed her features from our hero's attentive observation, who, completely screened, watched, with a beating heart, her every movement. A cambric handkerchief thrown loosely over her small head, was fastened under her chin in a simple knot, from under which her beautiful hair, which she wore in ringlets, waved gently in the morning air.

Her costume consisted of a muslin dress, with many flounces, made quite plain, though loosely from the waist to her throat, thus showing off her splendid figure to the utmost advantage. She wore no ornaments, and seemed indeed to Horace, who stood rooted to the spot, with his eyes fixed upon her form, the realization of everything perfect—

a being more divine, more worthy of admiration and love, than even his romantic nature had ever imagined, during his most ideal dreams of the fair creature he had long sighed for, and who now seemed sent, as if by the hand of providence, to cross his path, and cheer his broken spirit on its earthly pilgrimage.

Amy Cecil reached the gate, opened it, and disappeared. Horace gazed long upon the spot. At last, he raised his eyes with a peculiar expression, earnest, yet undefinable, and quickly commenced the operations of the toilet. In half an hour, he descended into the breakfast room, and found the whole party, including Madame Le Clerc, already assembled there.

“Good morning, Horace,” exclaimed John Cecil, “you must give up your London habits here, I can assure you.”

Horace smiled, bowed to Miss Cecil, and the old lady, and answered, “No one detests late rising more than I do, and I think one of the most degrading habits connected with

a life of amusement and dissipation is the necessity forced thus upon one, of sleeping away the delightful and invigorating hours of morning."

"Are you in earnest, Mr. Grantham?" said Amy, "if so, it is a certain indication that you, at least, will here appreciate and enjoy our old-fashioned habits. It is now nine o'clock—an hour later than we usually breakfast—out of compliment to you."

"I beg then, Miss Cecil," answered Horace, raising his eyes to hers, "the compliment may, forthwith, be dispensed with. If it is not," he added, laughing, "you will discover me, out of mere perversity, breakfasting alone in the garden at seven."

"I told you, my love," interrupted Mr. Cecil, "that Horace was an early bird. So let us breakfast to-morrow at the usual hour."

"Come," said Amy, "there was another reason for the change. 'I knew Madame Le Clerc was coming from her cottage.'"

"Oh, my dear," replied the old lady, "do

not say such a thing. I will breakfast at six o'clock, if you wish it. At this lovely season of the year, I always rise at five."

"An excellent practice, Madame," said Horace, addressing her, "conducive to the health of body and mind, and I have no doubt before I have been here a week I shall rise at *four*, and have the honour of escorting you to breakfast."

All laughed at this sally on the part of Horace, who, thoroughly charmed with his new acquaintances, came out in his most glowing colours, and produced a very favourable impression on the minds of both the ladies. Mr. Cecil and his son had so much to hear, and also so much news to relate, that the morning meal lasted nearly two hours; that is, they did not rise from the table for that period, during which an animated conversation was kept up, flowing naturally from all (except perhaps Horace), for all were interested, all joyous, and serene.

Happy scene! Delightful remembrance

of the past! For in this united family, bound as they were to each other in bonds of holy and confiding love, all the jarring and discordant elements of human nature, which poison social life, were unknown. Here there was no strife, no contention, no selfishness, here no worldly father ruled the household with a rod of iron, wrapped in his own dignity, and careless of the wishes or the wants of his own flesh and blood. Here—Heaven be praised, that in these times there are yet such examples left—no cutting sarcasm, no unfeeling reproach, wounded the gentle heart of Amy, or caused John Cecil to regret that the Almighty had given him feelings which could not have failed (had such an occasion arisen), both to have been deeply wounded, and also to have resented such conduct. In one word—Mr. Cecil was a MAN. He set more value upon securing the respect and love of his children, than he did upon the fact of what his dinner consisted of, or of what *people* might *think* of his establishment, or mode of life.

He had his reward. Who can doubt for an instant that he had chosen the better path, or that his enjoyments, as he sat at his own breakfast-table, surrounded by the happy group described, exceeded a thousandfold the selfish pleasures of the man of the world, who, spurning his children from his own board, permits all his thoughts to dwell upon trivialities connected with himself, upon money, and his *position* (horrid word) in society?

“Amy, my love,” resumed Mr. Cecil, “to-day I propose that we lionize Horace all over the place.”

“What? no fishing to-day?” cried John Cecil. “You may do as you please. I shall go up to the second lake. Is the boat there, Amy?”

“Yes, John,” she replied, “the new one is arrived from Gmunden, and I am quite anxious to try it. Do you row, Mr. Grantham?”

“Certainly,” answered Horace, “I am an Etonian.”

"But," said she, "it does not follow that you were an aquatic."

"Ah!" continued Horace, "I see you are acquainted with some Etonians, or you could not know all this. But I was 'a wet bob;' and I only hope you will soon give me an opportunity of proving my skill."

"Dear papa," said Amy, rising from her seat, "let us go upon the lake to-day; recollect I have not had a single row during your absence."

The fond father, thus appealed to, could not refuse. He nodded his head, looked fondly at Amy, put his arm within hers; and they stepped together through the verandah on to the green lawn.

"Now, Horace," said John Cecil, "I can tell you what it is—the governor will not leave Amy to-day, that is quite clear. Let us slip off, get hold of our rods and tackle, and go and kill some trout."

"Hum!" drawled Horace, as at the very moment he caught a glimpse of a muslin dress, some distance from the window,

“would it be quite fair to go without telling your father?”

“No,” said Madame Le Clerc, who held Mr. Cecil in profound respect, “how can you think of such a thing, John? I suppose your father wants to fish, and also to see the new boat.”

“Then why the deuce doesn’t he come?” replied John, who sometimes teased the old lady, though he loved her dearly.

“Because he prefers the society of Amy, Monsieur,” cried she, bristling up, “and no wonder, I should say, as I don’t suppose you would compare your sister to a *fish*!”

“Ha, ha!” laughed John; “perhaps she is a mermaid!”

“A what?” said Madame Le Clerc, who was obliged to laugh, “pray do not be so absurd; but go and arrange something or other with your sister. I declare I should like to go on the water myself to-day.”

“Your wish is law to me, my dear Madame,” exclaimed John Cecil, bowing low to the old lady, who returned his salute,

“and I shall now go and *insist* on a water-party taking place this very afternoon. Now, Horace, let us go and smoke a cigar in the garden.”

Horace took his arm, and they lounged towards Mr. Cecil and his daughter, where John produced his match-box and struck a light, offering his father a cigar at the same moment.

“Mr. Grantham,” said Amy, addressing him, “I caution you never to smoke in *my* room—every where else it is permitted; it is best to tell you at once, or we may quarrel, however absurd such an idea seems, about the fumes of that article, so dear to gentlemen—a precious cigar. I like the perfume of a *good* cigar in the *air* very much; and I think the English particularly ridiculous on the subject.”

“It certainly is a very great bore, in London, to be told by a fine lady,” replied Horace, “that you smell horridly of smoke, particularly after you have been exerting all your powers at the toilet to eradicate the

same. Yet I hold the man in abhorrence who *will* smoke in his wife's rooms. The poor creature is forced to submit, and then you hear the selfish brute remarking to a friend, 'Oh, Mrs. — *likes smoke*; she *never* makes the slightest objection to it,' &c., &c.

"Such a person must be deficient in good feeling, and even in taste, which I consider a very secondary thing," continued Amy, "habit certainly has much to do with it, and I will honestly say that I do not care about smoking out of doors in the least—in the house, I confess it is disagreeable."

"Never mind, Horace," broke in John Cecil—"I know where we can have a cigar at night."

"Ah, John," said Amy, "I know you always smoke in your bed-room—which is very incorrect."

"I shall not back him up in his wickedness," said our hero. "Have you arranged your party for the evening, Miss Cecil?"

"Yes," we are all going on the lake after

dinner to try the new boat," replied she. "As all here is new to you, Mr. Grantham, I am sure you will be gratified with the magnificence of the scenery we can show you." Miss Cecil now left them, and retired to her apartment, when the sounds of a piano were soon distinctly heard, indicating that Amy was no mean performer on that instrument.

"Does your sister sing?" said Horace to John Cecil, as they walked towards Madame Le Clerc's cottage, enjoying their cigars.

"Like a nightingale," responded John, who was in one of his uproarious humours "you will hear her to-night; she sings to papa every evening."

Horace did not reply. Nor can we attempt to define his feelings. Suffice it to say, that he already felt a spell,—a gush of feeling within,—that *something* whispered to him that moments, hours, days were approaching, fraught with divine pleasure, and that his destiny was now to be fatally

influenced by his connexion with the family of the Cecils.

The young men inspected the cottage. Horace was really charmed with all he saw, and they returned to dinner after having taken a short ramble in the forest.

"It is a beautiful day for fishing," said John Cecil to his friend, as they neared his father's residence. "I think we shall have some rare sport in the furthest lake this evening about sun-set, we have preserved it strictly, and I know there are lots of fish. Besides, we shall have the advantage of the boat; so that we can put out the spinning-tackle, and throw a fly from the bow."

"I am all anxiety," replied Horace, "both to enjoy the sport, and to witness the scenery of your delightful neighbourhood."

They found the rest of the party assembled in the drawing-room, and at three o'clock dinner was announced.

"We have always dined early ever since our residence in this country," said Mr. Cecil, as he showed the way into the small

but cheerful dining-room appertaining to the cottage. "It is all very well in England to dine at seven or eight o'clock, but I must confess that, individually, I prefer the habits of the foreigners in this respect."

"After all," replied Horace, "there is not, perhaps, so much difference as you imagine. We have our luncheons."

"Yes," interrupted Amy; "if you rob a lady of her luncheon there is not one in a hundred who can survive the day, although I think gentlemen can do very well without it."

"They not only *can*, but *do*, my dear," replied her father. "How some people can digest breakfast at ten, lunch at two, and dine at seven, I know not."

"However," continued Horace, "a Frenchman has the cup of coffee early, then his *déjeuner à-la-fourchette* at eleven or twelve, his dinner at five, and frequently his supper at nine o'clock."

"That is pretty well, certainly," said Madame Le Clerc.

"Well," added Mr. Cecil, "take a German: breakfast at seven, dinner at twelve, coffee at one, and supper at eight."

"Therefore, by your own showing, O, potent governor!" cried John Cecil, "an Englishman has fewer meals than any one of these you have enumerated."

"Granted," replied Mr. Cecil, "provided he eats no luncheon—which I confess, after my long residence on the continent, I should find it extremely difficult to dispense with. The English have sometimes one meal which I think horrid, and it ought to be prohibited by Act of Parliament—I mean what is called a 'meat tea.'"

"In England, where one always dines late," said Horace, "of course it is unnecessary; but, when one dines early, I do not see what can well supply the place of tea later in the day, unless, indeed, you prefer beer or wine again—which I certainly do not, and feel quite sure that the ladies are also of the same opinion."

"Certainly," replied the old lady; "Mr.

Cecil has a prejudice against tea, and therefore has been abusing it."

"I think it is quite time to change the conversation," said Amy, laughing, "or we shall lead Mr. Grantham to suppose that the all-powerful subject of gastronomy occupies an undue share of our thoughts. Pray, papa, discuss the merits of the Bavarian beer a short time—that will be much more interesting."

"It is excellent!" continued Horace. "I am sure it is not necessary to have wine on the table with that delicious beverage."

"I prefer it to champagne," added John Cecil.

"Well, I cannot say that, Master John," said his father; "but I prefer the Bavarian beer—when good, which this is—to any other beer, whether on the continent, or in Great Britain, where one gets quite confused with the immense variety of 'malt drinks' which abound. There is generally a peculiar beer for every county, besides hosts of 'strong ales,' mild ales, bitter beers,

sparkling ales, stouts, and lastly good 'wholesome ales.' "

"The truth of the latter assertion I should doubt very much," answered John Cecil; "but I won't allow you cannot sometimes have good beer in England."

"Of course you can, but generally speaking it is indifferent," replied his father—and here the discussion ended.

At half-past four o'clock, Madame Le Clerc and Amy Cecil were ready for the proposed walk, John Cecil and Horace attired themselves in the most approved fishing-costume of the day, which resembled that usually worn in England, with the exception of the picturesque green Tyrolean hat, with a black cock's-feather, which they both mounted on the occasion, and the merits of which were duly explained by the light-hearted young man as he presented Horace with one of his own, and insisted on his accepting it.

Mr. Cecil did not intend fishing, but stated his intention of devoting himself

entirely to the ladies. They bent their steps along the shores of the small lake on which the cottage was situated, and then, turning sharply to the right, threaded their way through a thick wood, by a narrow grass-path, which guided them.

In half an hour, a sheet of water became visible, which, on a near approach, proved to be a lovely lake situated in a hollow, surrounded in some places by thick brush-wood, down to the water's edge. In others the verdant turf stretched, like a soft carpet, from its shore towards the forest; and, at the further extremity, there stood a ruined hut, from the back of which, by Mr. Cecil's orders, a sort of boat-house had been constructed to contain his new purchase.

"Amy, my love," said Mr. Cecil, "I am all anxiety to see the new boat, and also the boat-house, which I ordered to be built for it."

"I have seen it already," replied Amy, and in some degree superintended its construction. I think you will be quite satis-

fied—it is very convenient, as, in case of rain, we can always take shelter in the old hut.”

“What!” exclaimed Mr. Cecil, smiling, “in the *Haunted Hut*!”

“My dear papa,” said Amy, “I have been there many times, and have never been disturbed by spirits, or even an old witch! What can you mean?”

“Simply, that you are now approaching the ‘haunted hut,’” answered Mr. Cecil—with mock gravity—“so beware!”

“I declare,” said Madame Le Clerc, “that you have quite excited my curiosity.”

“And also your alarm, Madame,” added John Cecil.

“How foolish!” cried the old lady; “it is a dismal-looking abode; is there any strange story connected with the place, Mr. Cecil?”

“So strange and so dismal,” replied Mr. Cecil, “that the superstitious country-people here rarely approach the spot, and if they

do, they are invariably observed to cross themselves, telling their beads and muttering, the 'Vater unser' to protect them from being molested by the shade of old 'Florian,' a wicked fisherman, who once occupied the hut, and, according to tradition, met his death in it in a most mysterious and shocking manner."

"Pray relate the legend," said Horace.

"It has been already related and put into verse by some modern German poet," returned Mr. Cecil. I have translated the verses, and to-night I will read to you my humble attempt to do justice to the original."

"I declare," said the old lady, "my patience will hardly last until the evening. I never heard you mention this story before."

They now reached the hut, and commenced an examination of the boat and boat-house. The former was a capital craft—roomy though not elegant. John Cecil and Horace launched it, as Mr. Cecil gave a

loud hurrah which echoed among the mountains, and the ladies stepped in. They pushed from the shore, and now the fishing apparatus came into full play. Two rods for spinning were quickly rigged out astern, and Horace was in the act of assisting John Cecil to fasten on a cast of flies to his light rod, when a tremendous tug and quivering movement at the top of one of the former indicated that they had already lured one of the larger trout from the depths of the lake. Mr. Cecil held the fish firmly. "It is a two-pounder," he exclaimed, "but this rod will soon kill him. Ha! what a plunge! Now he comes towards the surface!"

At this moment, the fish sprang out of the water.

"Gracious," cried Madame Le Clerc, "you have lost him!"

"Not at all" said Mr. Cecil, who played the fish with the skill of a perfect master of the art; at the present moment his Excellency is under the boat, so pray, John, bring the landing-net,"

John Cecil leant over, and, as his father drew the trout towards the surface, dived his net sharply under him, and the next moment he was in the boat.

“What a beautiful fish!” said Amy; “poor creature! Fishing is a cruel sport.”

“Read Sir Humphry Davy about that, Amy,” cried John Cecil, who, being in the seventh heaven of delight, was busily engaged in withdrawing the hook from the mouth of his finny captive.

Horace now took the fly-rod, and soon killed some more trout; he then gave it up to John Cecil, and sat down by the ladies in the stern.

“What an enchanting spot this is!” said he, addressing Amy, who had produced her sketch-book, and was rapidly committing to paper the outlines of the “Haunted Hut,” and the scenery around it.

“In this lovely neighbourhood,” she replied, continuing her occupation, “there are so many magnificent prospects, and romantic views, that I consider, comparing it with

the other places in which I have resided, as a sort of fairy land on earth. Ah! I shall always love this spot, and look back to the period we have passed here with fond regret."

She spoke in an expressive manner, and Horace Grantham felt that the fair being who addressed him was one, on whom the scene he now beheld, which she praised in such apt language, was not thrown away, and that she possessed a rare sensibility and noble mind.

"I prize our position here the more," added she, looking at Horace, because we came to this country straight from the neighbourhood of Glasgow, where (and her voice became suddenly lower) I was very unhappy. I never can forget the feelings of liberation and repose I enjoyed, when dear papa came back to us at Salzburg, and told John and myself he had taken the cottage we now inhabit for three years.

"It was the sort of life I had so longed for; and I now remember that the first

month or two after my arrival, was spent in a sort of dream of happiness and peace, so soothing was the influence of the air and the sublimity of the scenery by which we were surrounded."

Horace observed Madame Le Clerc, at this moment, watching Amy, with an anxious look. His eyes followed the old lady's, and he saw, to his astonishment, that Miss Cecil's countenance had assumed an expression of deep melancholy. She had ceased drawing, and was gazing listlessly on the water, as if buried in thought. Soon, though with a visible effort, she recovered herself, and again addressed Horace.

"I hope you will visit many of the most picturesque spots near us before you go," said she, "as I see you admire fine scenery."

"I am quite enchanted, Miss Cecil," responded Horace, bowing slightly, "and also ready to put myself under your guidance, during my stay, for I am certain that no one could perform the office of cicerone better than yourself."

"Besides," added Amy, slyly, "I will permit you to smoke in the air!"

"Ah!" cried Horace, "that is unfair, to allude to the wretched habits of man, at the very moment when my ideas were being raised above the earth, by the contemplation of Nature around, and also by your interesting conversation."

Amy Cecil looked at Horace for the first time rather earnestly, as these words passed his lips, for she did not exactly understand whether he addressed her out of mere compliment or was in earnest.

"Recollect," said she at length, "Mr. Grantham, that I detest compliments, as much as I admire sincerity and truth."

"Your pardon" answered Horace, "for the future you shall never tax me again on such a subject—but I *was* in earnest, and therefore I trust you will forgive me."

"What!" cried John Cecil, who had just hooked a monster, "are you quarrelling already? Do go ashore and let me have the boat alone for a time."

“Hollo! my young fellow,” interposed his father, who was curled up in the bow reading a book, “you’ll lose that fish—if you don’t take care—true enough, he’s gone—now I suppose next time you’ll kill your fish before you talk to your friends—however—your proposition is not a bad one—we will go ashore, and ascend that eminence, from whence we shall have a charming prospect, not only in point of scenery, but we shall have the mortification of witnessing you lose some more fish through your awkwardness!”

“I’ll bet you anything I do not lose another fish this evening,” said John, who did not appear to relish these remarks.

Horace assisted Amy and Madame Le Clerc to land, and, accompanied by Mr. Cecil, they rambled for an hour in the neighbourhood of the lake. Our hero did not leave the side of his fair companion who, apparently, equally pleased with her new acquaintance, pointed out to him many spots of interest, and delighted him by her *naïve* and animated descriptions.

On their return to the lake, they perceived John Cecil near the boat-house, engaged in putting by the boat, &c. He waved his Tyrolese hat triumphantly.

"I am sure," said the old lady, who had been seated on the bank, being unable to walk very much, "that madcap has had what he calls 'rare sport,' look at him!"

"How he enjoys himself," said his father. "Ah! that is the time of life for a thorough appreciation of sport, or any thing else, not absolutely reflective and sedate—happy twenty—what do you say to that, Madame?"

"That we must content ourselves, sir," replied Madame Le Clerc, "with what remains, and also be grateful that we have health, and other blessings innumerable to compensate us for the loss of those feelings which certainly do appertain to youth alone."

"You speak truly, my dear friend," said Mr. Cecil, offering the old lady his arm, for, between them there reigned a sincere friendship, and he fully appreciated her noble character, and sterling worth.

It turned out as they expected. John Cecil had killed no end of fish, was in high glee, and insisted that a good hour's trout-fishing was preferable to the contemplation of any scenery, however magnificent.

The whole party now turned their steps homewards, enlivening their promenade by animated and interesting conversation, and arranging their plans for the following day. It was just dark when they reached the cottage, and Horace felt, as he entered the garden close to Miss Cecil, that a day had passed such as he had never known before. New thoughts, new feelings, stirred within his breast; mingled sensations of admiration (was it yet love?) and newly-founded hope, chased themselves rapidly through his brain, and he awaited anxiously the hour at which he knew, from what John Cecil had told him in the morning, he should hear his sister sing.

He was not disappointed. After tea, Amy sat down to the piano, and the tones of her sweet voice gladdened the ear of the attentive

Horace. The air was a simple Austrian melody, entitled the *Mailüfterl* (May Zephyr). Amy Cecil sang beautifully, and as the song just named, depends for its success more upon the feeling of the singer, than on the amount of execution displayed, it was particularly suited to the fair performer, whose whole soul seemed to be occupied with the theme, and thus produced, on the ears of her listeners, a thrilling and powerful effect.

She also sang in Italian, from the grand operas, and finally, at her father's request, some touching English ballads, and then rose from the instrument. Horace thanked our heroine, with an expressive look, as he seated himself near her.

"Now, Mr. Cecil," said Madame Le Clerc, "do you recollect your promise about the 'Haunted Hut?'"

"To be sure," responded he. "John, fetch my writing desk—my grand translation lies therein."

The desk being opened, Mr. Cecil soon

found the paper, and, without further explanation, read as follows:—

THE DEMON TROUT, OR, THE "LAY OF FLORIAN, THE
WICKED FISHERMAN OF SEEHAUS."

THE day was bright ; a gentle breeze did flutter o'er the
lake,

When Florian, the fisherman, from slumber did awake ;
He oped the window, looked around, and, with a ghastly
leer,

Exclaim'd, " Oh Heavens, how I wish the strangers would
appear !"

This Florian, the fisherman, a bold, bad man was he,
All gaunt and yellow was his form, most horrible to see ;
His eyes were green, like to the wave that rolled close by
his door ;

He was a comrade, once beheld, forgotten never more !
The lake, shut in by lofty hills, was like to crystal clear,
And oft, from out its waters green, the leaping trout do
peer ;

Two stranger youths, with hasty stride, now burst upon his
view,

" 'Tis they," he mutters ; o'er his brow frowns dark and
darker grew.

" Ho ! fisher, speak ; dost know me not ? Hast thou forgot-
ten me,

" Who but a few days since did lure the trout from out the
sea ?"

" I've not forgotten thee," he said, unto the youth who
spake,

" But thou must pay me more, an' thou would'st fish upon
my lake."

"What! pay thee more?" the youth exclaimed; "I thought I paid thee well;"

His elder brother interposed, with "Send the brute to h—ll!"

Dark were these youths, their forms erect, and black their waving hair,

Their eyes upon the fisherman were bent with haughty stare.

He slowly turned him round, and said, "Your pleasure shall be done."

"Be quick, then, Jack," the younger cried, "for now begins the fun!"

The elder entered not the boat, but in the brook hard by, With skilful hand he often cast the gay, delusive fly;

The other rowed about the lake, and soon the fish did leap, And gambol round his painted flies, careering o'er the deep: But suddenly, when close ashore, with echo-starting shout, His brother, who awaited him, cried "Ho! the Demon Trout!"

They called him thus because the trout all ghastly was and black,

His bulk was huge, and sick he seemed; he lay upon his back;

"Ho! brother, reach the landing-net, that I may get him out!

"If I can catch naught else to-day, I'll catch the Demon Trout."

"Ha, ha!" laughed Florian, "ay, i'fath, you've got him safely now."

The trout within the landing-net did lie with sullen brow!

"He'll die, be sure—what use is he? Come, throw him in the lake!"

"What use?" said Florian, and he grinned, "my supper he will make."

He oped the tank and put him in, but little did he ween
The horrid fate awaiting him—the sequel will be seen ;
For scarcely had he closed the lid before he heard a splash ;
Within the tank, with frantic bound, the “ Demon Trout ”
did dash.

And thus he ponder’d to himself, “ He’ll eat me ; he’ll eat
ME ; ”

And does he think to trifle with “ the Demon of the Sea ? ”
Old Florian, ’twas thus he spake, unto the youth dark
haired,

“ Now hearken ! I have toiled for ye—my profits are im-
paired—

“ Two ‘ kronen thalers ’ broad and bright, I shall from ye
demand.”

“ Ho ! ho ! ” the strangers laughed, “ dost throw thus in our
eyes the sand !

We’re not so foolish as we seem, we’ll give you florins
twain,

And when we’ve paid you for the fish, we’ll ne’er come
back again.”

Old Florian grumbled—but he saw, that they determined
were,

So he cast an eye of jealous hate upon the stately pair !

And after they had seen him put the fish into the butt,

Their rods they bound together, and their tackle-books
they shut,

But Florian, watching when their looks *were turned another
way,*

Into the fish butt thrust his hand, and stole a trout away !

They left him there—his villany, they did not find it out,

Until they reached Ruhpolding’s Inn, the wind-up of
their route.

We’ll now return to Florian—he laid him down to rest,

His thoughts e’er dwelt upon the trout, and how to cook
him best :

" To-morrow, he shall be my prey, with vinegar and oil,
 Delicious morsel ! well dost thou repay a fisher's toil !"
 The storm arose—the waves ran high, the lake increasing
 grew,
 Till, roaring by his windows rolled the waves of greenish
 hue !

Affrighted from his couch arose, the fisher all in haste,
 And cast his terror-stricken eyes along the dreary waste !
 When suddenly amid the rage and howling of the gale,
Slap in his *face*, he caught a blow from a *tremendous tail* !
 And in his chamber—slimy all—did hop and skip about
 With horrid shrieks, and groans of death, the ghastly
 " *Demon Trout.*"

" You'd eat *me*, on to-morrow's dawn, my friend, I think
 you said ?

You quite mistake—'tis YOU I'LL EAT, and tear you *shred*
 from *shred* !"

Thus having said, the Demon Trout, stood up upon his tail,
 And grew, and grew, until he seemed a sort of youngish
 whale !

His glassy eyes did roll about—his mouth was open'd wide
 And Florian the fisherman did rush from side to side,
 In order to avoid the gripe of those infernal jaws,—
 But 'twas no use—when suddenly he tried a saving clause :
 " Oh ! König, hear me ! 'twas not I that caught you in the
 net

But that confounded Engländer who did not mind the wet !"
 " Hah ! dost thou dare to speak of him, *Thou traitor*
doubly foul,

Prepare for death ! and have a care for thy immortal soul !"
 Thus having spake he opened wide those horrid jaws again,
 And crunched the fisher Florian's head, who roared aloud
 with pain !

He tore his body limb from limb, then *eat* him where he
 lay.

And now adieu, my honest friends, for I have had my say.'

“What an extraordinary legend!” said Madame Le Clerc. “What is its antiquity?”

“I cannot tell,” replied Mr. Cecil; “but as the youths had fishing-hooks and tackle, we cannot suppose that the event occurred in the ‘Middle Ages!’”

“Besides,” continued Amy, looking up from her work, “the hut itself does not look so old! I am inclined to think the whole story a *fabrication*!”

“Well done, my love,” exclaimed Mr. Cecil, as the whole party were convulsed with laughter. “Why, my dear, you do not for a moment imagine that the ‘Demon Trout’ absolutely eat the ‘wicked Florian?’”

“No, dear papa,” answered Amy, who now joined in the laugh against herself, “I mean that I do not believe there is any foundation for the story at all; do you?”

“Why, I think there must be; and I have often endeavoured, when in conversation with the old priest, or some of the more intelligent peasants, to ascertain what

it might be, but always without success," responded Mr. Cecil. "Now John, escort Madame Le Clerc home; it's past eleven o'clock."

They soon retired to their bed-rooms. Our readers are here left to follow Horace Grantham and Amy Cecil to their respective apartments, and to settle, each according to his individual ideas, of what description the feelings were which agitated their breasts. One fact alone is worthy of being recorded, which is, that Horace spent an hour or more in gazing from his window on the starlight night, and that sleep did not visit the eyes of Amy Cecil with that alacrity which it had done previously to our hero's arrival in the Tyrol.

CHAPTER III.

It would be tedious to describe in detail the manner in which the days were passed by the party at the cottage. Whenever it was fine, the gentlemen either fished or accompanied Madame Le Clerc and Miss Cecil on some excursion or drive, to visit some point of interest in the neighbourhood. When it was wet, which was not often the case, as the season was unusually fine, Horace was generally to be found in the drawing-room, reading aloud to the ladies, or listening to the music and the feeling tones which issued forth from the throat of

D 2

Amy Cecil. These occupations and associations were not without their effect upon the sensitive mind of Horace. By degrees, he gave himself up entirely to the enjoyment of the passing hour, and the days glided rapidly away, in one continued round of happiness; the only drawback to which, was caused by his observing the occasional depression of her whom he now loved devotedly.

To an indifferent person, probably, this sadness would have passed unnoticed, but to the quick eyes of a lover, it was only too apparent. Horace had remarked it, our readers may recollect, on the very day after his arrival—when in the boat with Amy on the lake. Since then, he had observed the same expression, at intervals, to cross her features. This had given him much pain and uneasiness, and he had often been on the point of questioning Madame Le Clerc, concerning it, but had never, as yet, been able to muster sufficient courage to do so.

About ten days after their arrival, Horace and his new friends all spent the afternoon,

and had tea at the cottage, with old Madame Le Clerc, who exercised the duties of hospitality with infinite pleasure, and, on their return, the whole party were unanimous in their opinion, as to the kindly disposition and gentle aristocratic bearing of their friend.

“Strictly virtuous, and with the deepest reverence for religion herself,” said Mr. Cecil, “she unites to these attributes, the rare qualification of extreme leniency in her judgment on the actions and opinions of others. I have heard the old lady, when roused, become quite eloquent in defence of this, her favourite principle; and yet, no one can be a more conscientious or pious Catholic than she is.”

“Catholic or Protestant,” answered Amy, pleased to hear her father’s praises of one whom she ardently loved; “she is a noble woman—an example to us all; for I am certain that no one can cultivate her friendship without advantage.”

Horace always listened attentively to every

word which fell from the lips of Amy Cecil, and the more he knew of her principles and character, the more cause he found to reverence and admire her.

As for Amy, the fascination which Horace now exercised upon her nature was fully apparent. She had liked him from the first moment of their acquaintance, and, although the time was short, they knew more of each other, owing to their residence under one roof, than many people do, who have moved only in the same society, and who are *considered* to be intimate with each other in consequence—for there can be no doubt, that the real character is not fully developed until seen *at home*. Persons dress their bodies to go into society, it is equally certain that *almost all*, in like manner, dress up their minds and forms of speech for the same purpose, namely—“*to create an effect.*”

The following day, which proved very fine, the whole party proceeded to the lake, taking a slightly different route to their destination. On the way, at a sudden turn

of the path, the turrets of an old chateau became visible. Horace asked whose property it was. "Ah," replied Mr. Cecil, "the late owner was a friend of mine, indeed the only acquaintance I possessed in the neighbourhood besides Madame Le Clerc. He was an old man; a German Baron. His death was somewhat singular, and very sudden. He used to retire daily, after the custom of his countrymen, to smoke a pipe with his coffee after an early dinner, into the summer-house of his garden. The poor old man often told me that he had scarcely missed doing so ten times during the last forty years of his existence. One day last summer he was found dead in his chair, with the ashes of his pipe still smouldering in the bowl."

"It was, indeed, an unexpected event," said Madame Le Clerc.

"Dear Papa," interposed Amy, "do relate that very affecting story which you told us in Scotland, about the sudden

death of a friend of yours. It occurred, if I recollect rightly, somewhere in France."

"Certainly, my love," replied her father; "only is it not rather too melancholy a tale for the present occasion?"

"Yes," exclaimed John Cecil, "let us wait till the evening."

"I agree with John," continued Mr. Cecil, gravely, "the gentleman, whose death Amy alluded to, was not a friend of mine, though from the little I knew of him, I regretted much that we were not more intimate."

The day was spent as usual, and, on their return home, Mr. Cecil, when reminded of his promise, spoke as follows:—

"When Amy and John were children, not long after their dear mother's death, I settled for a time in a small town in the interior of France, for the double purpose of economy and their education. Among the few English families who resided there was one of the name of F——. They

consisted of the father, mother, one girl, and two little boys, of the ages of ten, seven, and four years. They led the most secluded life possible. Daily they were to be seen, always together, taking their usual walks around the town—the parents arm in arm in cheerful converse, occasionally stopping to answer some questions from their dear offspring who either walked orderly before them, or played cheerfully around. They were lovely children, at once the objects of their parents' anxious care and devoted love.

“ ‘Well done, ye good and faithful servants,’ said I to myself, as I often witnessed with delight this pleasing picture. ‘ May the blessing of heaven attend ye all!’

“ We had exchanged cards; but I found that any attempts at further intimacy were quite futile, as Mr. F—— at once gave out that they did not go into society. Indeed, so secluded were their habits, that I should probably have never known any thing further about them, had not my curiosity been awakened by observing that an in-

timacy existed between Dr. H—— and Mr. F——.

“The former was a friend of mine—an excellent man, a professor, and philosopher—who had devoted his whole life to letters, science, and the improvement of his mind. A perfect classic, besides being acquainted with several modern languages; a profound metaphysician, without pedantry, this rare man, though shut out from the world, was well known in it by his erudition, and the various works he had published, and also by his contributions to the periodicals, which included several English ones.

“Notwithstanding this, the Doctor enjoyed by nature an almost childish simplicity of character, which had never been hardened by too near a contact with the follies and vices of the world; so that, in his society, one hardly knew which most to admire—his profound learning, and various information, or his unsophisticated good-nature and ready wit.

“I asked the Doctor one day how he had

managed to break through the reserve of F——, and enjoy his company. ‘Oh!’ replied he, ‘we have only renewed our acquaintance; I have known him for many years; a better man does not exist, or one who performs his duties more creditably. F——,’ he added, ‘I consider a pattern to all husbands; so accustomed has he become to the society of his wife and children (who are, indeed, a part of himself, his whole life being wrapped up in their welfare), that it is with great difficulty I can get him to play a game of chess with me, the only relaxation in the way of amusement he ever allows himself.

“ ‘His whole time is occupied, assisted by his wife—an accomplished and most amiable lady—in the education of his children, and if doing one’s duty constitutes happiness, they deserve, and I believe do enjoy, a greater share of it than falls to the lot of many.’

“The subject here dropped, and shortly

afterwards the F.'s departed for Munich to spend the winter.

“One snowy morning I met the Doctor some miles from the town. His countenance was sad, and with an expression of deep pain there visible, he informed me that poor F— — had lost his wife after three days' illness, and was inconsolable. ‘Poor fellow!’ said he, ‘I cannot tell you how I feel for him! for in that small circle the loss sustained can never be replaced, or the regrets buried.’

“No, indeed, Doctor,” said I. “What a blow! The dear little children, too. Ah! it is too dreadful!

“We returned together, lost in contemplation and silent sorrow—for there really had been something so beyond ‘the world's customs in the devotion of this small family to one another, that the death of Mrs. F——, though almost a stranger, affected me far more powerfully than the news of the demise of many a relative of my own would have done.

“Poor F—— soon returned to G——; and I declare to you, the first time I saw him advancing in the distance, clothed in black, with the three little children similarly attired, clinging to his side, I am not ashamed to own that I turned down a side path to conceal the emotion I felt.

“For where was the gentle mother? It seemed so unnatural—so strange and utterly incomprehensible to me—the how—the why—and wherefore she was gone for ever, in so short a space; but so, alas! it was. And as I plucked up courage at last to meet the melancholy party, and make my bow, I perceived, at a glance, the fatal ravages which incessant grief had imparted to F——’s noble features; whilst the children particularly the little girl, seemed to have grown much older, though but a few months had elapsed, and already to have lost the infantine joy and gaiety of youth.

“I declare to you, the remembrance of what followed, even at this distance of time, affects me greatly,” continued Mr. Cecil,

with a faltering voice. "Cruel fate—hard destiny—in less than three weeks from that period the measles seized the whole family within a few days of each other.

"Dr. H——, with Christian zeal visited them day and night. Money and medical assistance were at hand, in plenty; but the word was written — the fatal decisions were made by *Him* whose councils we cannot fathom, and whose chastenings are for our good, and are not to be recalled. The poor father, raving with fever himself, soon wept over the body of his eldest child, and in his grief, called in mercy on the Most High himself for death, as the only deliverance from the wretched existence he must now endure.

"I cannot dwell longer on the scene—a miserable man, a mere skeleton in body, and wrecked in mind, the unfortunate F—— buried his beloved daughter at G——, as he had two months previously his dear wife at Munich.

"Many days and nights were spent in un-

availing sorrow, over her early tomb. The feeling and touching epitaph, written by F——, himself, was painted on the tablet over the departed angel, and, by the advice of his physician and exhortations of Dr. H. he at last consented to leave a place so full of mournful recollections, and deep, and lasting regrets.

“They went; the father and two remaining children, his only consolation and hope, to England. Soon after we left G——, and I had not occasion to go there again for two years. On my arrival, I found the Doctor, as usual, in his garret, surrounded with folios, pamphlets, maps, globes, and new publications, with the never-failing cigar hanging loosely from his mouth.

“After the first salutations were over, and I had partaken of luncheon, the conversation naturally turned on old friends in the place. I soon asked after F——.

“‘He has been here once; and I am grieved to say,’ said Dr. W., ‘there is no improve-

ment in him; indeed,' added he, sorrowfully, 'he has never been the same man since the death of his wife and child.'

"And the little boys?" I inquired.

"'Oh, they are quite well,' continued the Doctor, 'I only wish poor F—— had the peace of mind they have, but I much fear after his misfortunes he will never again completely recover his spirits.'

We were sitting that very evening at chess; a rap was heard at the door—'Come in;—and F—— himself entered the apartment. He started when he saw me, but could not retire; the Doctor greeted him warmly, and he sat down.

"'I have just returned from Munich,' said he, in a strange unnatural tone of voice.

"We both knew what had taken him there, and also what brought him to G——. I saw that he wished to be alone with the Doctor; so I shortly took my leave, deeply affected; for so dreadful a wreck—a person so utterly changed, it would be almost impossible to imagine. 'Poor F——,' I re-

peated, as I went home, 'what a fate is thine!'

"I resolved, whilst he remained, not to visit the Doctor as usual; for I felt that there was something sacred in his grief, and that I would not interfere.

"Not long after this I met Dr. H. in the streets.

"'Poor F. is going to-morrow,' he said, 'I am glad you have not been to see me, but when he is gone you need not be so shy,'

"The next morning I went at ten o'clock to his rooms. He met me on the stairs,—he waved his hand imposingly, and I was about to address him—I looked up and saw by the appearance of the whole man that something dreadful had occurred. Indeed he at first was speechless, so overcome was he with emotion.

"'Cecil,' at length said he, 'F., who was to have left for England this morning, is *dead!*'

"'Dead?' shouted I, 'how—where?' as the thought of suicide flashed across me.'

“ ‘Not as you suppose; thank God!’ replied the Doctor. ‘No—poor F. was found dead this morning at seven o’clock on the tomb of his daughter, actually embracing the cold stones which cover, as he himself has often told me, his own life-blood and existence.’

“ ‘The day before yesterday,’ continued the Doctor, ‘he called as usual, played a game at chess, and, on rising to go away, he presented me with a £10 bank of England note, saying—

“ ‘My dear Doctor, pray take this money. It is to defray the expenses of keeping my child’s tomb in order, and the small garden around it.’

“ ‘I represented, but in vain, that the sum was far more than sufficient. With a melancholy smile, he replied, as if with an ominous foreboding of his approaching end—‘Keep it, my friend; who knows how soon, and for what purpose, you may want it?’

“ ‘Here is the note,’ continued the Doctor

(producing it), and we both gazed on the crumpled paper with feelings of awe and astonishment.

“ ‘ Well, my representations were vain. F. came the next evening, and mentioned that he had felt wonderfully calm during his visits, and that he had a superstitious feeling of certainty that he should not leave again.’

“ ‘ But you are going to-morrow,’ I replied.

“ ‘ Yes. I believe I am,” he vaguely answered ; but who knows? I cannot divest myself of the idea, which I have latterly had haunting me through the day, and in dreams by night, that I cannot (that is the word) leave my daughter again. And is she not here?’

“ ‘ I thought it useless to argue with one in the mood he displayed. We sate late, and F. conversed cheerfully, more so than he had done for years. As the clock struck twelve, he rose to go, and, as he bade me good night, called out that he would step in

to see me *en route* to the railroad station, at nine o'clock. Little did I dream that the prophetic words and gloomy forebodings of my friend were so soon to be realized. At eight o'clock this morning, I heard that peculiar bustle in the house which imports something unusual and startling. My servant entered the room, and breathlessly informed me of the dreadful event which had occurred.

“ ‘Poor F. had packed his things, breakfasted, and gone out to take a last look at the spot he loved so well. Not returning, the master of the hotel, who divined whether he was gone, proceeded himself to the burial-ground, and there found my friend lying quite dead on the tomb of his child!’

The doctor stopped—we both paused—for we knew that nothing could be said, though how much felt, on so mysterious and strange an affair. At last, the doctor resumed the conversation, as follows:—

“ ‘There is something,’ said he, ‘so *un-usual, poetical, and divine*, in the manner of

F——'s death, that the more I reflect, the more I am inclined to look on it as a direct manifestation of the Almighty's will—for is not his end the very one he coveted, and how know we that, at this moment, he is not enjoying in another world, with freshly-constituted happiness, the society of his beloved lost ones?'

" 'These are vain speculations,' cried I.

" 'They *are* speculations, but not vain ones,' was the Doctor's reply; 'if they can lead us, who are left behind to believe, and glory in the mercy of infinite wisdom, that thought fit to remove from the uncharitable censorship of mere mortals, one who was, as you know, superior to most in earthly wisdom, and whose aspirations after beauty, worship, and holiness, though not in conformity with any of the numerous sects, who strive together in blind confusion here below, were most sublime, sincere, self-denying, and virtuous.'

" 'Peace be to his memory!' I responded.

" He was interred by the side of his child;

and," continued Mr. Cecil, as he finished his melancholy tale, "I never pass through that town without stopping on purpose to visit the burial-ground, rendered sacred to me by the remembrance of the virtues which I had witnessed in the life, and the touching and romantic circumstances attending the sudden and awful death of poor F——."

"Let us close the scene, for I cannot speak much more," added Mr. Cecil, whilst his hearers were affected so powerfully, that they could with difficulty restrain their outward emotion.

CHAPTER IV.

“I knew a man once,” said Mr. Cecil to Horace during one of their rambles, “who was positively driven mad, and died in a lunatic asylum, simply because *his relations and friends*, forsooth, were determined that not only himself, but his children, should go to heaven *by their road only*.”

“How dreadful! Do relate the particulars,” said Horace.

“Willingly,” replied Mr. Cecil. “K—had served some years in the army, but, being naturally of a retired disposition, devoted to

reading, and the investigation of abstruse subjects, a military life did not suit him—he married early—and retired to Germany, where I often visited him. His wife was an amiable woman, to whom he was much attached. Their happiness did not last long, for she died suddenly about four years after their marriage, leaving two children.

“‘These children,’ said K—to me, when I paid him my usual visit after the melancholy event, ‘are all I now live for; my happiness is gone—at least what is left of it, is centred in them alone. God grant that I may be enabled to guide them aright!’

“K—was a Deist. After long and laborious investigation, and patient thought, he had settled his mind down to the adoption of that simple yet sublime belief. However, whatever other people might think of him, I was, at that moment, fully impressed with the conviction, that the man who could utter so humble and fervent an appeal to

the Almighty will, had his heart in the right place, and that the children were quite as safe or safer in his hands, than they would be in those of many so-called Christians in their own land.

“K— then mentioned to me his intention of sending his children to England—to live with an aunt of his and her family. I did not see him again for some years, when I met him on the pier at Boulogne. I was quite startled even then by his appearance. ‘Ha! Cecil, is that you?’ he said, in a cracked, shrill voice, as he fixed his eyes upon me, and grasped my hand—‘Well met.

“‘Let us dine together and talk over old times.’

“I instantly acquiesced; for I felt much interested in K—, and was anxious to learn the causes which had so changed my friend.

“We repaired to his hotel. During dinner, K— drank much wine, and talked in-

cessantly, though in a disconnected and rambling manner, never alluding, however, to his children.

“On my part, I feared to ask after them, for I felt certain, that his present condition was somehow connected with their fate.

“At last, when the waiters had left the room, I summoned up courage to inquire after their welfare.

“I shall never forget the expression of poor K—’s features at that moment.

“He started as if a shot had been fired close to him, turned ghastly pale, and his eyes glared savagely upon me, with a look of incipient madness. Poor fellow, it was only for a second. The paroxysm past, he covered his face with his hands, and gave full vent to his grief, groaning heavily.

“Much affected, I rose from my chair, and approached him. He heard the movement and stretched out his right hand, which I

grasped as he turned away his head to conceal his emotion.

“‘God help me!’ said the wretched man, in broken accents, ‘you are the only person who has mentioned my children to me for twelve long months.’

“‘What is this!’ I cried, much shocked; ‘do, my dear fellow, explain yourself. Where are your children? You must know that you speak to a real friend!’

“‘Yes, yes,’ he said; ‘would that all my *friends* were like you!’

“After some time, he became more composed, and related to me the following shocking and scarcely credible tale:—

“‘You are aware, Cecil,’ said he, addressing me in his peculiar and melancholy tone of voice, ‘that I have always, though I hope sincere, at least in my own belief, or rather hopes connected with futurity, deeply regretted, on my childrens’ account—

dearer to me than children are to most men —(here his voice faltered)—that I could not embrace the faith and doctrines of Christianity, at least as taught in England; for, of all positions, I think that man is most to be pitied who, after deep thought and patient investigation, finds himself placed in this very unfortunate dilemma. As long as I lived in Germany, this circumstance did not embarrass me; but on my sad journey my heart misgave me on the subject. I was not wrong; all my nearest relatives, who are thoroughly English countrypeople, of excellent dispositions but narrow views, were electrified with horror, when the discovery of my opinions, which I never paraded, but which necessarily soon made themselves apparent, was made known to them. In short, the ‘infidel father’—and he smiled sadly—‘was soon given to understand that his own dear children, his own

flesh and blood—dearer to him than himself a thousand fold, were what they called in ‘spiritual danger,’ from contact with one whom they most charitably condemned to the most severe censure in this world, and everlasting torments in the next!’ K—— ceased speaking.

“I endeavoured in vain to lead his thoughts to a more rational idea on the subject, for I could not believe but that he, naturally most sensitive, and his feelings rendered morbid by constant irritation, had greatly over-rated the influence of his relations on the minds of his children—but it was all of no use.

“‘No,’ he said, gloomily, ‘I have done what I considered my duty. I have left my children with their relations, and have, for two reasons, absented myself almost entirely from their society; firstly, because I am rendered by ill health an unfit companion for them, or, indeed, any one, and

secondly, because I have made up my mind that it shall never be said I led their youthful minds astray. You understand me, Cecil?'

" 'I do,' I replied, 'and pity you from my soul. Believe me,' I continued, in hopes of imparting some consolation, 'this state of things cannot last.'

" 'No,' answered K——, slowly repeating the words after me, '*it cannot last! it cannot last!*'

"I saw, alas! too clearly how things were," continued Mr. Cecil, "but what could be done? *Nothing*; it was apparent that the, in my opinion, irreligious zeal and unchristian conduct of his bigoted relatives had robbed my poor friend already of the small share of peace and hope of happiness which might yet have been his; and I saw him depart on the following day for Germany, with feelings of acute pain, and anxious sympathy. Before he left, he

alluded again in bitter terms to his continued mortification on the subject, and in sorrowful, but not revengeful words, spoke of his miserable condition, and anxious hopes that a speedy death might actually soon separate him from those beloved objects, to whom, as he expressed himself, he felt he could be of no service, as they would be prejudiced against him, and learn to look on him as their spiritual enemy, or worse still, dangerous friend and father.

“I never saw poor K—— again, but I heard about a year afterwards that he had become insane, and was an inmate of a private lunatic asylum in England.”

“Heavens!” cried Horace, “I am shocked beyond description. Do you suppose that his relatives saw their conduct in its true light at last?”

“No; I am certain they did not,” replied Mr. Cecil, “for a total want of heart, a sort of wilful blindness to the consequences of

their actions, are characteristic traits of the bigoted and intolerant, and I should not wonder if these *saints* should rejoice in what occurred, and attribute the removal of poor K—— from their path to a *manifestation of the Divine will and pleasure!* ”

“ Monstrous! ” ejaculated Horace.

“ Ay, so it is,” continued Mr. Cecil; “ and I must say that in England, though ‘tolerance’ is the public law of the land, the idolized symbol by which we claim to be the most enlightened nation on earth, in my opinion there is no country in which it is less *practised* (at least in its true spirit) in private life. A man who does not go to church in England, no matter what his private virtues may be, or how great the benefits which he confers on his fellow men, is by many considered unfit for society, a lost creature, and becomes the subject of unfeeling allusions, sarcastic and cruel remarks, from *the elect*. Such treatment wounds deeply, is totally *anti-*

Christian, and calculated not only to sever those bonds of family communion which sweeten life, but, as in the case of our poor friend K——, actually to drive a man of a certain temperament out of his senses, or worse still, to render him dejected and unhappy for life.”

“Yes,” said Horace; “I consider it certain that differently-constituted minds not only *do* put, but cannot help putting different constructions on the meaning of words, and the obligations contained in them, for what seems reasonable to one man does not to another, and what is a matter of faith to some, is not only ‘no faith’ to others, but complete folly, besides.”

“Certainly,” resumed Mr. Cecil: “and should not this reflection humble all, and deter people, no matter what their own belief or form of worship may be, from the condemnation and judgment of their fellow-men? The mere difference of creed with

many, even in these tolerant and enlightened days, is sufficient to call down the most bitter invective and reproach, whilst any attempts at justification by an allusion to the birth, circumstances, or national religion of the persons, only produce fresh outpourings of wrath against those we call infidels and unbelievers, and who, as such, are reckoned unworthy either of tolerance or regard."

"Consider the vast difference of opinion," resumed Horace, "with which the word 'infidel' is regarded by the inhabitants of the globe—to a Jew, a Christian is an infidel, to a Mahometan, a Jew, and so on, till the various religions of this world are all gone through."

"Justly remarked," said Mr. Cecil. "And this, to a thinking man, instead of making him a blind convert to any faith, but enhances the difficulty of the question; and, whilst it should lead him carefully on to

an investigation of the evidences of his own religion, teaches him not to condemn as heretics all who differ from him, which is invariably observed to be the strongest proof of the religion of the bigoted and the ignorant; as if it were possible for one of low natural powers of mind, and bad education, under any circumstances to sit in judgment on a superior, always supposing that the latter, by his life and example, does not outrage society by his crimes, or interfere with the religious observances of the community to which he belongs."

"I have always considered that," said Horace, "a most difficult subject in metaphysics, when one is called on to investigate the degrees of 'powers of resistance to evil, and tendencies to good,' which belong to each individual, and to decide, in consequence, on the degree of criminality in a given action."

"It is, indeed, a most arduous task," said

Mr. Cecil, "to undertake—or, rather, to endeavour to do so—an explanation on this head; but I will willingly, as far as my powers go, give you what information I can.

"There can be no doubt that, when called on to judge of the criminality of an action, there is little or no difficulty in judging pretty correctly, according to the code of virtue and national law of the land we live in, of the *action* itself. But, when called on to pass sentence, as to the amount of blame or degree of criminality, the question and decision assume entirely another aspect, and demand that which it seldom obtains—patient investigation and serious thought.

"The same remark holds equally good with regard to decisions, or doubts of the mind of man; and this the zealous, the intolerant, in matters both of law and religion, will not, or cannot, understand.

“In the first place, it is quite impossible for any man, even if aware of the circumstances and education of another, to know the powers and capabilities of that man’s mind, or his temperament, so well as he does himself; nor can he say whether, if they had changed places, he himself would not have perpetrated the very crime (or hazarded such and such an opinion) which the other committed, and which he condemned with his utmost will. Secondly, this circumstance, *in point of fact*, renders the judgment of each other notoriously wicked and absurd; for if the man with strong animal passions (which alone, even at the very outset of the argument, place him in a materially different position to a man of a contrary temperament), who undergoes great temptation, without education, good example, or powers of resistance to evil, be hurried into the commission of great crimes, where is the wonder, and

who but the great God can be a competent judge of the degree of his criminality and wickedness? 'Judge not, that ye be not judged!'"

"Then, if I understand you rightly," said Horace, much interested, "you consider there are no circumstances under which one human being can condemn another."

"Certainly not," replied Mr. Cecil, "none; for whilst I would abhor the faults or crimes, or pity the beliefs or disbeliefs of those around me, I should always recollect that temperament, education, circumstances and natural disposition, make the man, and that, considering this, whilst the verdict is given against the action, both the charitable impulses of our nature, and the Christian faith itself, should lead us to look leniently on, and both hope for *and* believe in a merciful pardon to the offender.

"As you yourself, Grantham, remarked

just now, who, but Providence and perfect wisdom, can know '*all things*,' and I ask, is it not necessary to know all things, before justice can be perfect? This is allowed by all in law. Human law is both known, and acknowledged, justly, to be imperfect; but the intolerant and bigoted, the fanatic, nay, even the worldly-minded and careless, will not acknowledge nor act on this principle when applied to creeds, or the strangely different codes of morals, which grow out of these creeds themselves.

" You now have my views on that part of the sermon," said Mr. Cecil, " I mean, not only the impossibility, but the wickedness of judging hastily of the actions or opinions of others."

" I certainly," said Horace, " admire your reasonings, and quite agree with the conclusion you have arrived at; but, I presume, that although you would object, and very properly so, to the decisions of

fellow-creatures on each other, you would not deny that a great degree of criminality exists, and that in every person there are powers of resistance to evil, and inclinations to good, which should be cultivated, and for the neglect of which he, and he alone, can be answerable."

"Yes, but to whom?" quickly responded Mr. Cecil.

"Alone to the God who made him, I humbly submit, and not to erring mortals; for who but God alone knows the secrets of the heart, the strivings that may have been made against evil, though not seen, and the prayers for assistance and pardon never uttered in vain? That the individual *himself* is answerable to a higher power than man, there can be no doubt, but this position is entirely a different one, and leads into another and still more intricate investigation. These subjects—I mean, 'the powers of the mind itself,

the inclinations to good and evil,' the feeling of reward or gratification attached to good, and the contrary to evil actions, as evidence for the attributes of the Deity, &c., have been so ably treated, by, I think, Chalmers, in one of the celebrated 'Bridge-water Treatises,' that I cannot do better than recommend that interesting work to your perusal. I have it at home."

"I shall certainly read it," said Horace, for I have always, although I never previously had the good fortune to meet with one so able and willing to instruct and guide me as yourself, taken the greatest interest in these subjects, I think so imperfectly understood, because seldom investigated, by many even of the otherwise literate and well-informed."

"The subject itself," replied Mr. Cecil, "is so complicated and mysterious, that most people shrink from the very necessary task of information, through reading,—and

still more so of thought on what one does read—and conversation with those capable of judgment, if judgment it can be called, where all is hidden and beyond demonstration, although, no doubt, the object of legitimate research to those who have been endowed by the Creator with powers of intellect above their fellow creatures. I know of no opinion more erroneous, than the very common one, that men of a philosophical tendency of mind, becoming confused with their metaphysical researches, are apt to grow sceptical, and also greatly to overrate their own powers, and, consequently, to look complacently on their learning, whilst despising the ignorance of those around. On the contrary, a sincere inquirer, of cultivated mind, advancing with trembling steps in the broad pathway of the knowledge of things, their causes, and effects, must come to the conclusion, that, as the great Newton himself acknowledged, ‘all we know but teaches

that we know absolutely nothing,' and compare themselves, as he, with his gigantic intellect, most humbly, but no doubt correctly did, to 'little children playing on the sea-shore, while the immense ocean of truth lies unexplored before them.' "

"A beautiful simile," replied Horace, "and quite a sufficient answer to those who, contented with their own ignorance, and devoted to the present, seize every opportunity to sneer at the researches and labours in the cause of science, and the examination of humanity, which have distinguished many of our illustrious countrymen. Do you consider Divinity, taken in a general sense, an opponent to the advancement of knowledge?" asked Horace.

"Certainly not, for the Christian religion, separated from the subtleties of priests, in its native purity, is, no doubt, the perfection of what is good and beneficial to mankind," replied Mr. Cecil, "but the subject is one of

such extreme difficulty, that I feel the greatest delicacy in approaching it.

“There are too many who either *cannot*, or *will not*, look on things in an extended sense, for I can think of no happier way of expressing myself, that I have always considered it both inexpedient and fruitless to argue, or examine deeply, with people of this class; for if a man, which most do, comes to the conflict with the argument prejudged, and settled in his mind according to his own views, cased in an impenetrable armour of prejudice and self-determination, all evidence, all argument, however logical, all information, however extensive, is totally lost and thrown away; and the time, which should be occupied either in convincing his opponent that he is in error, or in gradually clearing away the mists of ignorance from his own mind, is consumed in useless controversy.

“A man intent on self-improvement must,

in the first place, divest himself of prejudice, and consequently of 'cant,' the offspring of prejudice—two most bitter foes, both to the advancement of knowledge and the well-being of society, in a moral point of view."

"Have you read Lady Blessington's Conversations with Lord Byron on the above?" said Horace.

"I have, and with great delight," replied Mr. Cecil; "for though an Englishman, and proud of my fellow countrymen, who no doubt have many excellent and sterling qualities to counterbalance these defects, I do not think that his lordship at all exaggerated the extent to which those evils extend in England."

"Though, no doubt," resumed Horace, "Byron, like most men of great genius, had his moments of scepticism, if not of unbelief, I am convinced from his sentiments, conveyed to us in the work alluded to, in such admirable language, by the distinguished

authoress, that both his religious feelings and views of human nature have been, and still are; totally misunderstood in England, and that the time will yet come when the praise, which has been so justly and lavishly dealt out to his imperishable works, will not be withheld from his private character, which, no one can deny, though marred with many human weaknesses, was nevertheless adorned with many virtues and endearing qualities. Indeed, if one so eminently qualified as Lady Blessington, with her acute powers of observation, and the great advantages given to her judgment by a constant and daily intercourse with Byron, failed, as she herself acknowledged she did; in forming anything like a correct, or, even to herself, satisfactory opinion of him, so chameleon-like and various were his dispositions, moods, habits, and conversation,—how wrong, nay, absurd is it, for a whole nation, backed by a powerful press, to assail,

with all the invectives of wrath and ridicule, one so infinitely superior in every way to themselves, merely because he had the misfortune to be separated from his wife, and to outstep, in some of his writings, those limits which our highly moral countrymen think fit to impose!"

"Ridiculous, indeed," said Mr. Cecil. "No man, in my opinion, whatever his belief, can be said to be wanting in religious feeling who is an earnest inquirer after truth, a devoted admirer of the works of nature, and their great Author, through these works. Byron was all this; the very fact of investigation, deep thought, research, inquiry, on the part of a man, is evidence sufficient to me to prove, whatever the conclusion arrived at on any subject, that the inquirer, though he may be wrong, is in earnest—*sincere*, and sincerity surely is the groundwork of everything beautiful and holy in our nature. The whole tenour of Byron's

conversation leads one forcibly to believe that, notwithstanding the bad habit he allowed himself of talking for effect, he was in reality one of these, and there are many passages in his life which denote clearly that the subject of religion was constantly in his thoughts, and met, when not clothed in superstition and intolerance, with his greatest consideration and profound reverence."

"I was particularly affected with the history of the death of Mrs. Sheppard, and the prayer she wrote for Byron, which her husband forwarded after her death to his Lordship," continued Horace. "That romantic and touching story evidently affected Byron powerfully, for Lady Blessington relates that he never alluded to the subject but in the most solemn manner, and, on giving her the prayer (a most beautiful composition), to copy, he observed:— 'Before I had read this prayer, I never rightly understood the expression, so often

used, 'the beauty of holiness.' This prayer and letter have done more to give me a good opinion of religion and its professors than all the religious books I ever read in my life.' Now I think it impossible, though Byron may have, and no doubt did, like many others, fail in the practice of virtue, to accuse him of a want of reverence for, or tendency to ridicule, that most awful and mysterious of all subjects, our being here and existence hereafter."

"I, for one, never could do so," answered Mr. Cecil, "as, notwithstanding there are many immoral pictures in his works, which are supposed to have an evil influence on the mind, but which accusation he himself, I consider, most successfully rebuts, his general impulses were decidedly favourable to virtue, and condemnatory of vice."

"How did he defend himself?" inquired Horace.

"By remarking," said Mr. Cecil, in reply,

“that he was willing to plead guilty of having sometimes represented vice under alluring forms, but so it was generally in the world, therefore it was necessary to paint it so, but that he never pictured virtue under the sombre and disgusting shades of dulness, severity, and *ennui*, and that he always took care to represent the votaries of vice as unhappy themselves, and entailing unhappiness on those who loved them, so that his ‘moral’ was unexceptionable.”

“Indeed it was,” replied Horace, who was a devoted champion of Byron, “and I cannot refrain from here noticing another story of him, which sufficiently shows the natural nobleness of his mind, and the Christian charity of his feelings.”

“In company, a person in the presence of Lord Byron, reverted to the unhappiness of an individual known to all present, and having instanced some proofs of the unhappiness, observed, ‘that the person was not

to be pitied, for he had brought it on himself by misconduct.' Byron's face, on hearing this sentiment, glowed with indignation, and, turning to the person who had excited it, he said—

“‘ If, as you say, this heavy misfortune has been caused by —’s misconduct, then is he doubly to be pitied, for he has the reproaches of conscience to embitter his draught. Those who have lost what is considered the right to pity, in losing reputation and self-respect, are the persons who stand most in need of commiseration, and yet the charitable feelings of the over moral world deny them this boon, reserving it for those on whom undeserved misfortunes fall, and who have that *within* which renders pity superfluous, and who have also respect to supply its place. Nothing,’ added he, ‘ so completely serves to demoralize a man as the certainty that he has lost the sympathy of his fellow-creatures. It breaks the last

tie that binds him to humanity, and renders him reckless and irreclaimable. This is my *moral*,' said Byron, in conclusion, 'and this it is that makes me pity the guilty, and respect the unfortunate.' "

"Most grand, most noble," burst forth Mr. Cecil, as Horace ceased speaking, "beautiful! how just the blow aimed at the worldly and false charity which abounds, and how feeling the explanations of his own admirable sentiments!"

"His horror of 'prejudice and cant' was very great," continued Horace; "speaking of the former, he alluded in terms of great praise to the following sentence in the preface of Sir William Drummond's 'Academical Questions,' an admirable work:—

" 'Prejudice may be trusted to guard the outworks for a short space of time, while reason slumbers in the citadel; but, if the latter sink into a lethargy, the former will quickly erect a standard for herself.' "

“Philosophy, wisdom, and liberty, support each other; he who will not reason is a bigot; he who cannot is a fool, and he who dares not is a slave.”

“Is not the passage admirable?”

John Cecil, though always present, seldom took any part in these interesting conversations, though he was an attentive listener. He was too young to venture to offer any opinions, and also too modest to do so; added to which, he did not inherit, as our readers we hope have surmised, from the slight description of his character, that love of thought and thirst for knowledge, which so characterized his amiable and learned father. He saw, which was very natural at his age, everything on the bright side; and, although aware that his father had been unfortunate, and he himself, in consequence, in a position in the world far inferior to that in which he might have been, his cheerful disposition and buoyant frame of mind rendered him

supremely happy, and more than contented with their humble mode of life, sweetened as it was by the knowledge that the bonds of love and affection united them all firmly together.

His father had anxiously watched John Cecil's disposition in childhood, and his talents and powers of mind in youth, and though he had, in some degree, been disappointed in his genius, that failing had been more than compensated to him by the thorough amiability and docile temper of his son.

Mr. Cecil wisely judged that, although John Cecil's education had been strictly attended to, and he was in every way an accomplished, if not a learned, young man, speaking two or three modern languages, and possessing a fund of general information, it would not do to force him into any of the arduous professions, or to expect any great degree of perseverance in study in him.

He, therefore, having consulted his son as to his own wishes, determined that his career should be that of "arms;" and, whilst we write, he was waiting for a commission in a regiment of the line, which the authorities had promised he should have without great delay.

Horace had latterly become much interested in the conversations which have been briefly described between himself and Mr. Cecil, and never lost an opportunity of reverting to those topics which he thought likely to bring his friend "*out.*" Mr. Cecil remarked this, and, as he had formed a very favourable opinion of Horace's judgment and intellectual powers, and saw that he thirsted for information, he felt it to be his duty, when thus appealed to, to state his sentiments without reserve, confident that he addressed one whose heart was in the right place, and whose curiosity was not prompted by any idle wish, or vague and indefinite purpose.

After the ladies had retired, Mr. Cecil and Horace often sat up till a late hour in earnest conversation, the subject of which will be related in the following pages.

CHAPTER V.

“WHAT do you consider the difference between a ‘matter of Belief’ and a ‘matter of Faith?’” asked Horace.

“There is a wide difference,” answered Mr. Cecil, “though few are aware of it, particularly as the two words, in a theological point of view, are often used in the same sense, when they should not be so. For instance, in the German language, the same substantive (*das-glauben*) signifies both Faith and Belief; also, *glauben* the verb—to think or ‘to believe.’ Strictly speaking,

I understand a proposition for the Belief to apply to the extraordinary and improbable, whilst 'Faith' demands an acquiescence in the miraculous and impossible. Thus, we all believe in history, and most people in the same way believe, though without comprehending, science in its various branches, such as astronomy and physics. This, by many, is reckoned to be 'Faith,' but it is evidently not so—it is legitimate belief in matters by no means impossible, authenticated by learned men, and generally received as truth, though it cannot amount to that certainty that is obtained through the medium of the senses, which, again, is neither 'Faith' nor 'Belief,' but positive knowledge—most decided conviction.

"For instance, 'there is a city called London.' I have been in it; therefore, 'I know it.'

"There was a city called 'Bagdad.' I have never been there, but 'I believe' it ex-

isted, because it is a matter of history, and there is no reason why it should not have existed.

“But if I am called on to believe, that a golden city, without foundations, is in the middle of the Atlantic; or any other asserted fact, which is contrary to experience and the course of nature, miraculous, and therefore impossible, as far as our reason goes, it cannot be a matter of ‘Belief,’ and, if I consent to its adoption as a truth, it must be through ‘Faith,’ and ‘Faith’ alone.”

“Then,” said Horace, “the miracles recorded in Scripture must be adopted as truth, through Faith, in this manner.”

“Decidedly,” replied Mr. Cecil, “and, when once adopted, Faith, with most people, becomes Belief, though, I am willing to admit that there are many minds so constituted that they avoid doing this, because they cannot, or will not, even on a super-

natural subject, cause their reason to be subservient to their faith.

“ I consider the grounds of a rational faith are, that the things revealed be not contrary to, though they may be above, natural reason; that the revealer be well acquainted with the things he reveals, and that he be above all suspicion of deceiving us. Whatever propositions, therefore, are beyond reason, but not contrary to it, are, when revealed, the proper matter of ‘ Faith;’ and no wise man will refuse his assent; for, as Bishop Butler remarks, ‘ Probabilities are to us the very guide of life, and when the probabilities arise out of evidence, on which we are competent to pronounce, and the improbabilities merely from our surmises, where we have no evidence to deal with, and perhaps, from the limitation of our capacities, could not deal with it, if we had it, it is not difficult to see what course practical wisdom tells man *he ought* to pursue, and

which *he always* does pursue, whatever difficulties beset him—in all cases, except one!" "

"Of course, he alludes to scepticism regarding Christianity," said Horace.

"Yes," answered Mr. Cecil, "and I must say I consider the remark most just and philosophical."

"I should like to hear your definition of the word 'Faith,' and the obligations contained in it, at greater length," said Horace.

"According to Voltaire," replied Mr. Cecil, "'Faith' cannot amount to more than 'an assent of the will to probability;' submissive credulity, 'which cannot approach certainty;' 'obedience and respect to things incomprehensible;' and, I am inclined to think that there cannot be a more philosophical, or—although Voltaire wrote it—a more satisfactory explanation, even to a sincere Christian himself, of the word, with

the exception of the allusion to the 'approach' to certainty, which I maintain that, regarding Revelation, it does, quite as nearly as the nature of the subject admits of, and sufficiently so to make it our bounden duty to adopt and cultivate the principle. The analogy between 'Faith,' in a religious and mundane sense, and also the necessary junction of 'Reason and Faith,' in the formation of the Christian character, has been so beautifully and logically commented on by many divines, and also by a writer in the *Edinburgh Review* of October, 1849, that I cannot do better than refer you, for my opinions, which coincide almost entirely with his, to the pamphlet in question."

"Is it now in your possession," asked Horace."

"No, I am sorry to say it is not," answered Mr. Cecil; "but I was so delighted with it, that I think I can, sufficiently for our purpose, recall his arguments, should

you feel inclined for a discussion of so grave and interesting a nature."

"I am all anxiety," replied Horace.

"As far as I recollect," resumed Mr. Cecil, after a pause, "the author commences by quoting 'Butler,' to prove that the entire constitution and condition of man, viewed in relation to this world alone, and consequently all the analogies derived from that fact in relation to a future world, suggest the conclusion that we are here the subjects of a probationary discipline, in a course of education for another state of existence, and that the efficiency of that course will be greatly vitiated by allowing an undue ascendancy to either 'Reason' or 'Faith' in our progress. He then briefly analyzes the two principles, and in a masterly manner, which carries instant conviction to the reader, proceeds to illustrate his views by various quotations from others, and explanations of his own. He justly touches on

the doctrine of 'probabilities,' so imperfectly understood, as being, though no doubt not absolute conviction, quite sufficient to justify, nay, to imperatively call on all for ready belief. 'Men often speak,' he says, 'as if the exercise of 'Faith' was excluded from their condition, as inhabitants of the present world. But it requires only a very slight consideration to show that the boasted prerogative of 'Reason' is here also that of a limited monarch, and that its attempts to make itself absolute can only end in its own dethronement. Without faith, no man, however powerful his intellect, or extensive his education, can escape from the confused chaos of ideas and mythical reasonings, which must be the result of an examination of his own mind.' "

"I have always found that to be the case," interrupted Horace, "in my metaphysical reflections, and I think the consideration alone sufficient to prove the

necessity of Faith, and also its junction with Reason.

“Certainly,” replied Mr. Cecil. “The reviewer then, though with the utmost respect, proceeds to the discussion of ‘Revelation,’ and the evidences for it. His philosophy here is sublime; for whilst on the one hand he is a most determined advocate for Christianity, on the other he is quite disposed, in his ethical reasonings, to make all those allowances for the aberrations of the intellect, and also to justify, whatever the conclusions arrived at, the SINCERE endeavours of man in the elucidation of ‘TRUTH,’ which are always denied them, let us hope, because past their comprehension, by the prejudiced and bigoted class of the community.

“He says, I recollect, that the ‘key-stone of all ethical truth is—that only voluntary error condemns—that all we are really responsible for is a faithful, honest, patient investigation and weighing of evidence, as

far as our abilities and opportunities admit, and a conscientious pursuit of what we deem truth, wherever it may lead us.'"

"But does not such a doctrine justify unbelief?" asked Horace.

"Certainly not," replied Mr. Cecil, "for whilst in the truest spirit of Christian charity we leave such a one to the merciful judgment of Him who created such an intellect, the unbelief itself is most reprehensible. In every Christian land it ought, and in England most certainly will be, severely commented on, and also be highly prejudicial to the comfort and well-being of the individual."

"The author, moreover," continued Mr. Cecil, "does not quit this subject without stating his conviction that such cases are in reality rare, though too many persons are to be found, who assume rashly that they have been dispassionate and patient in their search, thus cloaking their unbelief with the covering of the want of an intellectual power,

whilst, in reality, it may arise from very different causes—such as a love and worship of the world, a desire of notoriety, or, worse still, an inward objection to the doctrines and restraints imposed on the passions by the Christian religion. He quotes Chillingworth as to the truth of the original statement, and rightly concludes, that the guilty liability just noticed to self-deception, cannot militate against the representation itself.”

“If this principle were rightly understood and practised,” remarked Horace, “it would reduce, in a great measure, the numberless evils which arise from misguided zeal and intolerance; and, in my opinion, it is, in point of fact, our bounden duty, whilst we pay implicit obedience and veneration to our holy religion, thanking God that He has granted us individually that measure of faith which may suffice, to avoid the condemnation, or rash and hasty abuse of those who, on intellectual grounds, may differ from us.”

“Precisely,” said Mr. Cecil, “but, as the writer in the *Edinburgh* proceeds to remark, and in which I cordially agree, whilst acknowledging the principle, one cannot too severely condemn that now prevalent form of unbelief, which arises, particularly with the young, from rashly meditating, in the cloudy regions of the German philosophy, on difficulties, evidently beyond human reason, but which that philosophy too often promises to solve; for I consider that the highest achievement of philosophy, is to know when it is vain to philosophize—and to feel with the author, although it is utterly impossible for me to convey to you, in words, more than a mere idea of his admirable lecture, and vigorous and eloquent language, that the junction of ‘Reason and Faith,’ though cried down by the Oxford School, and scoffed at as an impossibility by infidels, is, in reality, our only safeguard; that they are coeval with the nature of man, and were designed to dwell in his heart together.”

“ But does not the writer,” asked Horace, “ defend the attributes of ‘ Reason;’ as, in my opinion, that ‘ Faith,’ which is so common, and which is based entirely on a blind adherence to tradition, is scarcely worthy of the name—and, philosophically speaking, cannot be adopted by any intelligent mind?”

“ I assure you,” replied Mr. Cecil, “ he is extremely severe, though very just, on this point.

“ He says, that the old conflict between Reason and Faith still rages, though in a less open form than formerly; he calls the ‘ faith’ you have alluded to, and which so many, who are both uncharitable in their lives and severe censors on their neighbours, consider the possession of as the ‘ one thing needful,’ an ‘ utterly unreasonable faith,’ no whit better than the ‘ faith of a heathen,’ who has no other or better reason to offer for his religion, than that his father told him it was true! ‘ Better,’ he adds, ‘ is it,

that a man should be a Christian, even by an utterly unreasoning and passive faith (if that be possible), than no Christian at all. But, *at the best*, such a man is the possessor of the Truth only by accident; he ought to have, and if he is a sincere disciple of Truth, will seek, some more solid grounds for maintaining it."

"Then you consider," said Horace, "that however metaphysical the construction of a man's mind may be, investigation, if he is sincere and in earnest for Truth, is attended with no danger; and that he will be eventually guided by infinite wisdom to the adoption of his duty."

"The question," replied Mr. Cecil, "is an extremely intricate one. My own opinion is, that although I do not think it will always be the case, I consider it will generally be so, and that if it is not, it is evidently no business of anybody's but the man's himself; and, further, provided he does not make an

unnecessary display of his sentiments, and thus offend the society to which he belongs, no one has a right to stigmatize his name with odium on account of his principles, which, though different to those around him, may have been adopted in all sincerity, and are, very likely, a cause of annoyance and pain to himself."

"Granted," replied Horace, "but you will not deny that, however sincere a man may be, the investigation of the evidences of religion, and also a knowledge of ethics, are accompanied with certain perplexities and doubts, which, for a time at least, mystify the mind, inducing confirmed pyrrhonism in some, and the adoption of various forms of belief in others."

"The fact is too apparent to be denied," returned Mr. Cecil. "Indeed, it is granted by most of our eminent and candid divines and reviewers; but that fact cannot, in my opinion, release a man who is capable of it,

from such investigations. Indeed, he cannot help them. And when the real philosophy of moderation, and the absolute necessity of faith, dawn upon his mind, he will perceive that the very admission of the facts you have stated, are in reality evidence for Christianity, are one of the strongest proofs in its favour; for if man is to believe nothing but what his reason can comprehend, and to act only on evidence which amounts to certainty, where the merit or reward of 'Faith?' for where there is no reason to doubt, there can be none to believe. Butler is most candid, but also clear on the point, remarking that, as no greater difficulties (if so great) are attached to the pages of revelation than to the volume of nature itself, especially those which are involved in that dread enigma, 'the origin of evil,' compared with which all other enigmas are trifles; so it is our duty, in an acknowledgement of the impos-

sibility of solving these problems, to grant the same indulgences to the apparent discrepancies to be met with in the Christian scheme, which, he adds, we are not rashly to assume, because we cannot solve them, are, therefore, incapable of solution, but rather to suppose that with the advance of time what appears to us incredible may eventually be cleared up, and become the decided object of our belief, as it has been previously of our faith and veneration."

"Then," resumed Horace, much interested, "pray inform me what your ideas are of an approach to a perfect Christian character, for I am of course aware that to expect perfection in this world—though many lay claim to it—is not only ridiculous, but impossible."

"The man who," answered Mr. Cecil, gravely, and with emphasis, "wishing to lead a correct life, and having a firm belief in a future state, is led

by this wish to examine the Bible, and religion in general, in an extended sense, with a modest, yet firm mind, finds it impossible (for so he must in many cases, and this cannot be too strongly urged), to reconcile the mysteries of the Gospel to his understanding: yet, in sincere admiration of its morality and virtue, wishing to have something to guide him through life, and to sustain him in sorrow and death, causes his reason on these points to be subservient to his faith, and though his faith is a rational one, and eminently opposed to the blind faith alluded to, fosters a hope and trust, which by constant prayer and meditation will eventually become his most decided belief, his safeguard and assistance, that the Christian religion, though perverted by nations, and demoralized by priestcraft, is the only revealed and divine one, that he himself and his family are favoured individuals in being members of the Church,

and that the difficulties attending its adoption will after death be made clear to him, and others, who have really hoped for and trusted in such explanations, and led lives in conformity to it to the best of their abilities, position, education, and natural constitution of mind.

“On the other hand, I cannot sufficiently condemn that scurrilous and unchristian spirit which would impale as heretics all of a different mode of thinking from themselves, including, as their ranks no doubt do, many not only learned but conscientious men, who become confirmed in their scepticism by this display of intolerance, and rightly judge that its professors can in reality have little of the charity in their natures which their creed teaches, and which they pretend, and only pretend, to advocate.

“When a man of this kind is jeered, and scoffed at as an infidel by others, who, though professing Christianity have probably

never thought deeply or seriously on the subject, whilst he has given it his most attentive consideration, merely because this class choose to say, 'we believe,' he turns in disgust from such, thinking—if that then is 'belief,' and such conduct the consequence of that belief, I feel I am, at least, much better without so empty an acquisition."

"That must inevitably be the result," answered Horace, "and, of course, you would imply that this ignorance on the part of many Christians, though greatly to be deplored, tells only against them, and in no way against the evidences or the merits of the faith itself."

"Just so," replied Mr. Cecil, "although it is very difficult to make people understand this. There are many who consider, and I believe conscientiously, that faith, no matter how obtained, or of what description, is the only necessary principle for our salvation, and that the slightest discussion on its

nature weakens its force. I am not one of these—within certain limits a proposition of truth must, to many people, not only court, but bear their investigation, and firmly believing, as I do, in our holy religion, I am always ready, as far as my powers go, to state my sentiments, reserving to myself the right of judgment, as to whether the person I am addressing approaches the subject with that solemnity and veneration which it deserves.

“Nothing to me is so contemptible, or wicked, whatever our opinions may be, as giving vent to them in a careless or indifferent way. I can understand and respect a man, who, professes Deism, provided it is accompanied with respect and toleration to others; but I confess I cannot understand, or sufficiently express my indignation, when I hear religion spoken of slightly, whether it arises from carelessness or unbelief; for, independently of the

wickedness, it argues a total want of both head and heart, of a regard to one's own character, or the feelings of others."

"You said," resumed Horace, "at the commencement of our conversation, that you would speak of the powers of the mind, and habits of thought of a human being generally, in connexion with 'Faith,'—how acquired—and what the degree of responsibility, and your own conclusion on this interesting topic."

"Come, Horace, be moderate," gaily replied Mr. Cecil, looking at his watch, "I am quite fatigued, let us have at 'ethics,' to-morrow night, if you please."

"What time is it?" asked Horace, who would willingly have remained longer.

"Only two o'clock in the morning," was the reply—"so adieu for the present."

Horace shook his friend's hand warmly, and retired, pondering deeply on what he had heard.

CHAPTER VI.

THE following night they resumed the conversation, as follows:—

“In speaking on the subject of ‘ethics’ which, according to ‘Maunder,’ signifies the doctrine of manners or science of moral philosophy, which teaches men their duty and the springs and principles of human conduct,” began Mr. Cecil, “one should always bear in mind the immense effect of habit,” not only on the actions, but also on the thoughts, and eventually on the reasoning faculties of our species.

“There can be no doubt, that in all communities there are certain actions, or rather certain ‘habits of thought,’ which, if indulged in, will produce these actions—such as murder, lust, rapine, revenge, cruelty, and dissipation; and no one will deny that an individual must be responsible for the degrees by which his mind becomes familiarized with the contemplation, and consequently the eventual performance, of these crimes.

“According to the best authorities, and quite in accordance with my own views, a human being is not answerable for the first emotions of evil in his heart; some of which are involuntary, and others given birth to by the contemplation of outward things. But the responsibility on his part clearly begins the moment the idea or object is fixed in his brain, and becomes thus subject to his controul, his rejection, or encouragement. On the one hand, should he enter-

tain and foster the feeling or train of thought which he knows to be evil, or continue the contemplation of the object, as an inducement to it, such a feeling or thought, by constant indulgence, will not only become familiar, but, by degrees, will lose that shape of evil which it possessed at first, and the individual, conscience losing its just balance from not being listened to, will be hurried into the commission of crimes, which, entirely owing to his own want of firmness and virtue, have gained a complete ascendancy over his better nature.

“On the other hand, if the voice of conscience is attended to in time, it is exactly *vice versâ*, for by the instant banishment of the evil idea or object from the brain, which all have in their power, though not in the same degree, the temptation to evil is insensibly diminished, and at last a complete victory ensues.

“In short, the mental contemplation of

evil, if indulged in, makes the sinner, and the banishment of it the virtuous man, so that all, more or less, are thus responsibly situated, and are in consequence most certainly called on to investigate and decide on the different 'habits of thought' which induce these effects, and their certain consequences.

"This must depend, of course, on the different religious creeds, powers of mind, the education, temptations, and circumstances of the individual, so that, in reality, it is impossible for any man exactly to judge another. But the principle is general, just, and obvious, and the only means we have of forming any opinion of our fellow men—though I consider it is not sufficiently borne in mind by many of our moral philosophers in their decisions on the frailty of our species, and the causes of those crimes which exist, and have existed in all states of society, from the earliest to the present times."

“I do not see how this argument,” said Horace, “although, as far as you have gone, I acknowledge its weight, can tell, in conjunction with ‘Faith,’ and the obligations we are under to that principle.”

“I have no objection,” continued Mr. Cecil, “to state to you how I consider this intricate matter. It cannot be denied that ‘Faith,’ in a theological as well as in a general point of view, is subject in a very great degree (like all other objects of consideration to the brain) to the effect of ‘the force of habit,’ as above alluded to. Faith, however, being of a supernatural nature, it is impossible that the same degree of certainty can be arrived at, as to whether the objects of the different faiths, or the obligations contained in them, which human beings are called on to subscribe to, are, in reality, worthy of our decided endeavours to cultivate, or, on the other hand, to banish from the mind, as is acknowledged to be the case

regarding 'trains of thought,' which induce the crimes before-mentioned, or the victory over them.

"For instance, 'Faith' with many people is the easiest thing possible. Looked on in this manner, the 'forces of habit,' less in contemplation, however, than in outward performances (for such persons cannot be said to think deeply), have their full effect, and eventually no doubt do bring the mind to a more decided belief on the objects of that faith ; but that cannot prove to me that the faith itself is, *from that circumstance*, the true faith, or calls more sensibly upon our acquiescence and adoption."

"No," replied Horace, "it would apparently merely indicate that the person in question, having cherished, what he believes or thinks, the right faith, the 'power of habit' has had the usual effect; and, by constant repetition, that naturally becomes a belief, which, at first, was only an idea or proposition of faith to his mind."

“Exactly so,” responded Mr. Cecil, “pray observe also, that there is a state of mind directly opposed to this; which arises, no doubt, in many instances, from weakness and superstition, but certainly also, often from decided conviction, amongst good and learned men. I allude to the many changes of religion which occur so frequently in these times.”

“I am not one of those who consider that the change of faith necessarily implies wickedness, or weakness; and I also think that these changes occur as often from sincerity, as from depravity of mind—the ‘force of habit,’ or the entertainment of certain ideas, having had, no doubt, a very great share in the decision and consequent conversions we are alluding to.”

“Then, if I understand you rightly, said Horace, “you would argue that, as the Deity has no doubt implanted in our bosom, by the decisions of conscience, cer-

tain feelings of happiness and self-congratulation, on the avoidance of temptation, shunning of vice, and advancement in virtue, and *vice versâ*, thereby clearly indicating his own attributes, that this position does not hold good with regard to 'faith.' "

"Certainly not," replied Mr. Cecil, "for the very reason that, as far as my experience goes, I do not consider those feelings of congratulation and reward, which you have just alluded to most correctly, can be at all discovered in connexion with 'faith,' or a change of the same, for whilst in the civilized world, murder, lust, theft, cruelty, &c., are both punishable by its laws, and are the certain sources of unhappiness to the perpetrator, a change of faith is constantly made, both with the full acquiescence and the self-congratulation of the conscience of the convert; without, moreover, at all biassing his previously-formed dispositions to virtue or vice, and consequent influence on the society to which he belongs."

“Then, according to this view, how is a man’s faith, and consequent belief, to be regulated, and how far do you consider him responsible for his conduct in a religious sense?” asked Horace.

“In the first instance,” said Mr. Cecil, “It must naturally depend on the circumstances of his birth, his parents, and education. Secondly, on his natural constitution both of body and mind, for these are intimately connected. Thirdly, upon the society he is thrown into. And fourthly, and more particularly, upon that intellect with which God has endowed him as his noblest gift, and the neglect of the cultivation of which, is, in my opinion, a greater sin, and more reprehensible, than the rejection of the mysterious part of any religion whatever, always supposing that, (whatever Theologians may say to the contrary) which I believe to be often the case, viz:—the intellect positively refuses to sanction an

entertainment of the doctrines necessary to that belief."

"What you have just said," continued Horace, in reply, "reminds me of an event connected with this subject which occurred some years ago."

"Pray relate it," said Mr. Cecil, "for of all topics, I have always considered this the most interesting."

"Being, naturally, of a metaphysical turn of mind," resumed Horace, "at the same time I hope not less anxious or humble-minded than every one ought to be on so mysterious a subject, and finding that, instead of reaching any definite point, my ideas became only more and more confused in my theological researches, I began to despair of arriving at any conclusions, amongst the mass of controversy and conflicting opinions which I everywhere met with. I was at that time at a private tutor's, in a remote county in England, previously to my

entering the army, and I was very slightly acquainted with the clergyman of a neighbouring parish, who had always pleased me in the pulpit by his thoroughly practical and charitable discourses, as much as his great talents, and agreeable powers in society, had called forth my admiration and regard."

"I suddenly formed the, no doubt, strange determination to appeal to this excellent man, to state my difficulties and doubts, and to request his advice and assistance, intimating that, should he favour me with an interview, I hoped he would find me, although well versed in theology, neither stiff-necked, nor beyond the reach of redemption. I confess I expected a refusal, though I trusted greatly in the idea of the character of the man I had formed, to hope for success

"I received the following reply—

" ' Mr dear Sir,

" ' I have read the letter you have

done me the honour of addressing to me, with the attention and interest it deserves. My first impulse was to sit down, and write you a long epistle in reply, but reflection whispered to me the fear of the inutility of so doing, and discouraged me. I cannot imagine that if experienced and learned controversialists have failed with you, an obscure and partially informed individual like myself will succeed. Religious discussions I avoid as much as possible, because I have seldom seen any advantages accrue from them; but, if you please, I will willingly have one long conversation with you any day.

‘Yours,
—————’,

“When the time approached,” continued Horace, “I confess I felt very nervous, and half regretted my rashness in entering into controversy with one so much older and better informed than myself, but the sin-

cerity of my desires, and the very kind manner in which Mr. —— opened the subject, at once disarmed my fears, and I have never had cause to repent having made him my confidant, adviser, and friend.

“Having distinctly, though briefly, stated my difficulties to the Rev. Gentleman, who most liberally and kindly heard me out, I must now state what those difficulties were. To the morality and doctrine of the gospel, I bowed in sincere admiration. My doubts were, as to the nature of Faith and Belief as explained by English divines, and also the difficulty, under these circumstances, of ever coming to a better knowledge of the signification of ‘regeneration,’ ‘spiritual faith,’ ‘holy fervour,’ ‘the elect,’ &c., on which so much stress is laid by Christian doctors. Also the incomprehensible mysteries of the Trinity, the origin of evil, the redemption ; and lastly, the actual state of the Christian world now, under the Christian dispensation, added to my doubts and fears.

“I stated, at length, most of the arguments which we have already gone over, and made a particular attack on theological controversy, as being, in my mind, a stumbling-block, and nothing else, in the road to any conclusions on the subject, as it involves contradiction, and leaves nothing but a confused chaos of ideas.

“Mr. —, when pressed, allowed fully the weight of this, but defended Christianity and his own views in an admirable manner. He did not indeed for a moment pretend to explain impossibilities; but he stated that which never had occurred to me before, and which I acknowledge to be of the greatest weight and truth, viz., that he had observed that all Deists who were men of virtue, acted in their daily lives on the very principles and precepts of Christianity, which, notwithstanding, they would not acknowledge to be true. Hume he quoted, I recollect, particularly. He deduced from this

argument the following ingenious and truthful one:—That these very men, having had the benefit of being born under a Christian dispensation, have imbibed from that circumstance (though unconsciously) the very principles which guide their conduct, and that, in point of fact, such a man was no doubt in reality a Christian character (or rather his character must be indebted to Christianity for much good), though, owing to some peculiarity of the mind, or construction of his intellect, he himself could not, or would not, see that he was one.

“ ‘This,’ added Mr. —, ‘is both illogical and wicked; yet I will candidly admit that I believe there are minds so constituted that they *cannot* entertain orthodox Christianity; also, that such minds cannot, in my idea, be condemned hereafter, provided the individuals have carried out the Christian course of morality to the best of their abilities.’

“ I confess,” continued Horace, “ I was delighted with this reasoning, and could not sufficiently admire Mr. ——’s clear method of argument and tolerance of opinion. His further advice to me was, to put a complete extinguisher on the mystery, and to endeavour to act up to the forms and precepts of the gospel. The numerous difficulties involved in a thorough search of the Old Testament he fully allowed, and could not explain, merely remarking that, as little instruction was to be got, it was better to say nothing about it, repeating, ‘ I begin with the New Testament.’ This I thought odd; but I fancy I now understand his meaning. Deism does not involve immorality and wickedness? Certainly not; but why refuse the very doctrines which you, as a good man (Deist or not), proceed to form your conduct on? ‘Where again,’ he continued, ‘is the pattern for virtue and perfection, if not in Christ?’

“Mr. —— then entered into a very able statement to prove that civilization is indebted to Christianity (which by others, however, is attributed to other causes); that our laws of protection and justice under which we live are a part of the grand scheme, and that it is the height of ingratitude to reap these daily benefits, and deny the author of them. Doubts will remain, and difficulties enough to a thinking man, but, continued Mr. ——, they become greater instead of being reduced, if one allows an undue spirit of research into mystery and things incomprehensible.

“Mr. —— finished by remarking that our minds are so constituted that we, even in the case of reading a debate on an intricate question in politics, or research into history, are charmed, we know not how, with the *cleverness* of each statement, and thus become sceptical as to the right of either!”

“Did you have many more conversations with your friend?” asked Mr. Cecil.

"Never," replied Horace, "on this subject; for as he himself allowed that controversy on miraculous events, and the positions deduced from them, were both dangerous and fruitless, we tacitly avoided a recurrence to them; but we formed an intimate friendship, and I honestly consider myself indebted for much sound information and any just views which I may have adopted, to his tuition and kind assistance."

"He must, indeed, from your account, have been a first-rate man," said Mr. Cecil; "for no doubt in the frame of mind in which you addressed him, had you been met on his part with illogical haste, and intolerant opinions, you would have reaped at least no benefit from the interview, had you not become in consequence more sceptical than ever in your religious views."

"I recollect," said Horace, "he quoted Newton, Pascal, La Place, Locke, and Milton, as all believers in that faith, which they had no interest in upholding."

“I believe Newton was an Arian,” replied Mr. Cecil.

“Have you ever read Sir Humphrey Davy’s ‘Consolations in Travel?’ ” asked Mr. Cecil.

“No,” replied Horace; “but I will do so if you can lend the book to me, for I heard you praising it very much the other day.”

“I think very highly of the work,” said Mr. Cecil, “and it contains much interesting information and discussion on physiology and metaphysics?”

“Sir Humphrey was a great fisherman, was he not?” continued Horace.

“Undoubtedly,” replied his friend, “and some of his most successful exploits were performed at or near the very spot where we now are—Gmunden, and other parts of the Tyrol.”

“I recollect mention being made of it in his ‘Salmonia;’ and also an account of that monster-fish, ‘the huchen,’ or salmo hucho;

concerning which you promised me some information not long ago," said Horace.

"I cannot do better, my dear fellow, than refer you to Sir Humphrey himself; but, as I propose making an excursion on the first favourable day to the Traun-fall, the only spot where the 'Stand Huchen,' (fish of the species, who seldom quit the locale, for in general, you know, they possess the migratory habits of the salmon, and descend the Danube as far as the Black Sea,) are to be found. I will defer any further description, till that occasion, when I trust you may be enabled to kill one."

Horace was eventually obliged to gather all his information regarding the "Huchen," from the book in question. Circumstances occurred shortly, which tended to keep our cavalier within certain limits, dependent principally upon the movements of one who now occupied his every thought, and without whose society, fishing, or any other

species of amusement, would have been spiritless and tame.

He now seldom left Miss Cecil's side the whole day. They occupied the drawing-room in the morning, and after dinner were often to be seen alone, in some sequestered nook, Amy, apparently, occupied in sketching, whilst Horace lay stretched upon the verdant grass at her feet.

CHAPTER VII.

“TALKING of the ‘Force of Habit’ on the formation of character,” said Mr. Cecil, “how responsible the conviction of its immense power should make all parents and guardians in the direction of the studies, pursuits, and in the choice of society, for those committed to their care!”

“Yes;” answered Horace; “I consider few men reflect on their own conduct or welfare, as inhabitants of this world, independently of the next, till twenty-five years of age, or thereabouts, and the great mass

not till thirty, at which period of life, if a man to a certain extent is not his own doctor, both for body and mind, I confess I think his case a hopeless one."

"Very true," replied his friend; "in consequence, my argument holds good, that the formation (not of original character which, indeed, all possess, but) of character, necessarily moulded on the 'forces of habit,' depends much more on the parents, relatives, and friends, than on the man himself; who, in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred, will follow and allow his principles to be formed in conformity with those around him."

"Is not this faith?" said Horace.

"In my opinion, it is not," said Mr. Cecil, "though, in some degree, it partakes of its nature; and here I differ with the learned writer in the 'Edinburgh,' who brings forward the example of children in his argument. I consider it merely the

natural result of undeveloped instinct or reason; an 'act of faith,' as I have before remarked, being the adoption, as truth, of something really *miraculous*, which nothing we teach our children is, in reality, though it may appear so to them."

"Then, if you allow the force of faith, even partially, regarding children, and also the young, why cannot the same argument apply to the evidences of a revealed religion?"

"In a great measure, it does," replied Mr. Cecil. "In one case, however, 'Reason,' or rather 'Instinct,' (as when reason asserts its just claims, we judge for ourselves instead of trusting to others,) is satisfied, and we, naturally, being helpless in childhood and weak in youth, follow the impressions which are made by the 'forces of habit,' through the example of our immediate helpers and associates; whereas, in the other, reason cannot ever, from the supernatural nature

of the case, be thus satisfied, and faith is called on much more largely in consequence."

"But," said Horace, "if impressions are, which you acknowledge to be the case, thus easily formed in childhood and youth, is it not the duty of all Christian parents who firmly believe in, and act up to the religion themselves, to bring up their children in the faith?"

"Decidedly," replied Mr. Cecil, "and though I am not certain that some of the early teaching in spiritual matters which many think necessary is not a mistake, I never can blame, but, on the contrary, think most highly of, people who, in all sincerity, educate their offspring with a due regard to their moral and religious, as well as their intellectual state. But you do not, I see, quite comprehend me. Though I consider 'Reason' as subservient to 'Faith' on religious subjects, I do not from this

argue that 'Faith' does not merit our most decided attention and regard.

"I only affirm that the degree with which 'Faith' lays hold of the mind must depend on the individual, on his or her previous manner of life, and education, &c., and that the person is not on so supernatural a subject either so reprehensible or responsible to others for his or her belief and conduct, as is generally imagined."

"That I can easily understand, and acquiesce in," said Horace. "You would merely advocate 'liberty of opinion,' and condemn that uncharitable zeal in religious matters which would unreflectingly censure all, not only of a different, but those who, professing the same belief, do not, or cannot, hold exactly the same opinions on that Faith as we do ourselves."

"Precisely," returned Mr. Cecil; "for I hold that the amount of Faith or Belief does not, and cannot, depend on the man himself,

but on other circumstances over which he has little or no controul, and against which he cannot strive, however much his inclinations may lead him to do so.

“This will not do, I am aware, for all divinity, but I can make nothing more of it, merely remarking that I greatly prefer, ‘good works’ to ‘good words,’ and have a much better opinion of the religious belief of him who is devoted to charity and self-improvement, than to that of a censorial bigot, or a self-righteous and intolerant sectarian,—in fact, I do not see how a man can be justly blamed for his *opinions*, provided they are sincere, his actions meanwhile being asafe, and our only criterion of how far those opinions are worthy of our adoption, or regard.”

“But,” said Horace, “does not this argument of yours on the ‘forces of habit,’ cut both ways? I mean, if they have, as you, I believe correctly, state, so powerful an

effect on the generality of mankind, the position, in consequence, of the mass is unavoidable; and it therefore only remains for the inspired, or men of genius, to lay down and direct the codes of worship or virtue, or maxims, if you will, which they wish their followers to adopt."

"That is exactly the point to which I wished to bring the discussion," answered Mr. Cecil; "for a well-informed man, a dispassionate and close observer of human nature and history in general, must here have the conviction forced on him, that all the great revolutions in ancient and modern times, which have, of course, not only influenced but changed the creeds, the laws, and the moral discipline of nations, have in reality, in each case, been brought about by the genius of one individual. Some of these have laid claim to inspiration, others have really believed themselves inspired; but it certainly appears to be the construction of

human nature that such men should quickly have disciples and followers.

“These, augmenting rapidly, become a sect—their doctrines and opinions get root—and whether the original founder was sincere, or merely acting from self-interest, the result appears to be the same—namely, that the mass who adopt the faith and principles, become, through ‘the forces of habit,’ the ready tools of their more wily leaders, and actual believers in the system, if, indeed, the word ‘Belief’ can be correctly used on such an occasion.”

“Then,” said Horace, “how is Truth to be attained?”

“In my opinion,” said Mr. Cecil, “it cannot be attained in this world; but that conviction by no means should deter men from the search, provided it is conducted with all due sincerity and humility. Unfortunately, history indicates clearly that imposition and fraud are quite as successful

as integrity and virtue; therefore, all that remains is for the rulers of nations, the men of letters and genius, who necessarily influence not only the temporal, but the eternal interests of the mass, to endeavour to separate the chaff from the seed, and, fully impressed with the importance of the trust committed to them, never to hesitate where reform appears necessary; and, on the other hand, to use great discretion and a sound judgment before interfering with institutions, or codes of morals, on which laws are formed, which are based in antiquity, and have such evidence to support their claims, as should render them binding to all, save the sceptic or the infidel."

"And this is the ground on which you would place Christianity, and the evidences for it?" said Horace.

"Decidedly," answered Mr. Cecil; "therefore, as a firm believer in it, it is not only my duty, but the duty of all who agree with

me, to train up their children, and those within the circle of their influence, in the faith, and, through the medium of early education, and our own example, so to guide the 'forces of habit,' both internally and externally, that they will, and generally do, have their full effect; and thus perpetuate, from generation to generation, what WE CONSIDER 'Truth,' and the only 'Truth' to save mankind in the world to come."

"A difficulty still remains," said Horace. "I allude to the great variety of religions, and the different codes of morals and standards of virtue springing from them, which abound throughout our globe."

"As far as we can judge," answered Mr. Cecil, "the difficulty has always been apparent, and probably will long exist; but it does not follow that it will never be cleared up. No philosopher will deny that sincerity to others which he claims for himself, in matters of opinion. This reflection is the

very ground-work of tolerance—that boon, through the dark ages so long withheld, and thus the undoubted cause of all religious persecution and warfare, particularly amongst Christians, though, in truth, it is the principle of all others inculcated by its holy founder.

“It is quite clear to me, that error cannot be imputed to a human being who acts in sincerity of spirit. On sincerity, or non-sincerity, in matters temporal and spiritual, the beauty or vileness of character depends. The construction of society, and the limited capacities of human nature, do not admit of a correct judgment being formed of each other by mortals in this respect.

“If due weight is given to this consideration, it should teach us, instead of being hasty and vindictive, to be charitable and just, to hesitate in our decisions of right and wrong, and to lay aside that animosity of spirit, which is the certain characteristic of ill-formed and vulgar minds.

“On the other hand, nothing can be more culpable than a neglect of, or a luke-warmness in advocating a religion, or an opinion, which we, after due investigation, are convinced is ‘truth,’ or at least an approach to it, and as such, of course, worthy of our adoption and cultivation.”

“Yes,” said Horace, “but you cannot deny the same indulgence, or rather it is equally the duty of a sincere Jew, or Mussulman, to advocate his religion with his followers; and does not an Infidel, who turns Christian, even on conviction, become a renegade to his own faith, and thus merit their reproach?”

“Decidedly,” replied Mr. Cecil. “Here again there are two separate considerations—both equally deserving of attention—of two faiths which possesses the greatest claim to adoption? and, secondly, is the convert actuated by a sincere wish for the

attainment of truth, or is his conduct influenced by mere worldly motives?

“It is clear that the latter question is unanswerable. Regarding the former—whilst we can safely leave our own religion to the defence of our divines, and the evidences collected by them, it is equally clear that other religions have also their zealous supporters and sincere advocates, which only the illiterate and bigoted would sweep at one fell swoop from the face of the earth.”

“Sincerity is the ‘cardinal virtue,’ in my opinion,” said Horace, “equally laudable in a Jew, a Hindoo, or a Christian. For what is sincerity but ‘truth,’ and what is truth, but ——?”

“Ah—you do well to stop!” exclaimed Mr. Cecil. “It were well if all rash speculators in metaphysics did the same. The riddle, ever open, remains unsolved—the Gordian knot unloosed. Yet it must ever

be the duty and the highest delight of intellectual man to persevere, with 'REVERENCE' and 'HUMILITY' for his watchwords, in the place of 'infidelity' and 'pride.'

"You allowed just now," said Horace, "that all human beings have their original characters and dispositions. Do you argue from this that a man, owing to these forces, is not answerable for his actions and opinions?"

"I entirely agree," replied Mr. Cecil, "with Lavater the physiognomist, who, in the commencement of his work, writes most admirably on this subject, and justly makes the above reflection the groundwork for Christian charity and tolerance in the judgment of our fellow-men.

"He compares the freedom of a bird in a cage as an exact emblem of human liberty. 'Man,' says he, 'possesses his circle of activity and feeling, the mind has the particular boundary in which to act, but that

boundary is imperatively fixed.' He then blames Helvetius for offending both understanding and experience by the assertion, in which he attributes to education solely, the power of forming and correcting the dispositions of humanity. From this he deduces that the question should not be asked,— 'How should So-and-so act in such a situation?' but 'What is his ability of performance in consequence of the powers with which he is gifted? how much may be hoped from him, considering the particular situation of his case?' Each character is capable of the most wonderful changes, yet these changes are determinal in this or that particular way; each individual possesses a large circle of action, and sees himself the owner of ground which he may plant in agreement to the manner of the soil. However, he can plant no other seed but that which he has received, and improve no other land but that on which he has been fixed, or, in other

words, both his natural disposition, and his situation, and his circumstances, besides his education, must contribute to the formation of his character, and consequent actions on the stage of life."

"But is not this philosophy a direct blow at morality, and the laws by which society should be governed?" asked Horace.

"By no means, if properly understood," replied his friend; "superficially, it appears so; but recollect that, as far as we can judge, if there were no vice, there could be no virtue in the world, and that though human beings are vicious, it is evidently designed that there should be such as necessary agents in the development of virtue, and, therefore, it is clearly our duty, whilst we deplore the crime, to pity and assist, but not to condemn the individual, who, notwithstanding his sin, may have far greater excuses than thoughtless judges would allow him for the performance of it, and also tendencies to good undeveloped in

his character which require mercy and tenderness, instead of censure and reproach, to bring them forth from the mass of evil, and the unfortunate career which may have placed him in his present circumstances.

“ At the same time, there can be no doubt that there are certain crimes and certain people whose conduct is marked by a total defiance of all liberty and law, of all fear of God and man, who are justly condemned and avoided as utterly irreclaimable, and to whom, apparently, either leniency or pardon would be totally misplaced. These cases, however, are rare ones, and the fact of there being such people does not at all militate against the general principle which I have before urged. The misfortune is that many, very many individuals, who have only been thoughtless, or committed those faults which, more or less, are common to all, get condemned and spurned, not only by society, but even by their own relatives, while in

reality these unfortunates, in their seclusion, not only often humbly repent the follies of their youth, but develop many virtues, which would, if they were known, shame the more fortunate worldlings who, equally guilty, if not worse, launch forth their invectives with bitter hatred and unfeeling pride. Depend upon it, however, as a general rule, it is not ordained that man should decide on the conduct of his brother mortals."

CHAPTER VIII.

“ I AM most anxious, my dear Horace,” resumed Mr. Cecil, “ that I should not be mistaken by you on the subject of religion, or my views upon it; for recollect, that during our conversations, we have not been canvassing the intrinsic merits of the Christian, or any other faith, but the construction of the mind of man. If I have been led, whilst speaking on so difficult a question, which, if fully investigated, necessarily penetrates into, and encroaches on Theological debate, to induce you to imagine, that I

would advocate the least approach to infidelity, Deism, or the German materialism which abounds, I not only regret it extremely, but, at once, disclaim any such intention.

“The blessings which we enjoy as Christians, under that divine and perfect dispensation, cannot be prized too highly; its morality and beneficial influence on mankind cannot be over-rated. I merely hold that, in the present day, there is too much reason to fear that the Faith itself, as practised, has lost much of its original purity, and that we have departed far and wide from the doctrines and sublime precepts of its Holy founders. Fortunately, this cannot interfere with the merits or the evidences of the Faith itself, the former of which are obvious, and the latter quite as satisfactory, and worthy of our credit and belief, as the nature of the subject can admit of. Individually, I am a sincere,

though, I hope, a humble believer in Christianity.

“But Christianity, in my opinion, in its true spirit, consists more in the practice of charity to our fellow-creatures, than in a zealous observance of its forms, which though excellent, and most worthy of our regards, are certainly not alone sufficient to constitute our Salvation, or hopes of pardon.

“Every man, however correct his life may be, however virtuous his actions and intentions, must acknowledge that he is an unworthy labourer, that the taint of original sin clings to his very nature, and renders an atonement, a Divine pardon, and spiritual assistance, his only hope of deliverance from the failings and short comings of humanity.

“Where natural religion ceases, though it must be allowed in that investigation alone, there are ample evidences of the

wisdom and goodness of the Creator of the universe, and of his exalted benevolence, the sublime light of Revelation steps in, and elucidates the mysteries of our being; explains away the misty confusion and uncertainty in which the Deist, however virtuous, must be enveloped, offers a merciful pardon to the sinner, and promises him a glorious immortality.

Therefore, I say, presumptuous and sinful is the man, who would reject, on Philosophic or other grounds, this boon from the Most High, this perfect manifestation of the Divine love and charity to mankind, which, however incomprehensible to our reason, contains in its precepts a code of such virtue, such charity, such forbearance, and such hopes of deliverance, as alone stamps it to be of immortal birth, and as such calls loudly (with all our gratitude) on our faith for its adoption. But, on the other hand, whilst acknowledging, as I do, with

all due respect, the truths of Christianity, and its exalting influence on our species, I cannot shut my eyes to the fact, that, under the cloak of a too zealous administration of its laws, the spirit of the religion itself is entirely lost sight of, and intolerance, bigotry, and superstition, are openly advocated, instead of that true charity and forbearance, which were the principal attributes of our blessed Saviour himself. And I am so convinced that such conduct, instead of making converts, or fixing the wavering faith of an individual, is almost certain to have a contrary effect, that I may have, whilst defending moderation, gone rather further than I intended, and induced you to imagine that I do not attach sufficient importance or reverence to the subject." Mr. Cecil ceased speaking.

"Your fears are unfounded," replied Horace, "for, during our discussions, which have been, as you say, chiefly confined to

ethical subjects, though much has been touched on, on your part, which many people would consider as both dangerous and improper, I can assure you that I have listened with admiration to your reasonings, confident as I was, that your final and individual deductions would be a justification and defence of Christianity—without a firm belief in which we should, indeed, have little or nothing to guide our steps, or to solve the enigma of our existence.”

“Undoubtedly,” continued Mr. Cecil, “though I am a decided champion of Christianity, I hope that I am neither so unlearned nor so superstitious as not to be aware that, as there are different religions on earth, so there are different inhabitants of it, whose natural intellects, personal positions, education, and general circumstances, vary immensely, thus rendering it not only uncharitable, but impossible, for any human being to attempt to judge them, however

answerable each person may be, and no doubt is, to his Creator, for the neglect or cultivation of his talents and advantages."

They now reached the village, and Horace's heart beat quickly as he discovered the ladies, escorted by John Cecil, advancing towards them.

Amy Cecil was very silent, and Horace particularly remarked this day, that abstraction of manner and nervous agitation, which he had noticed previously. Her voice trembled when she replied shortly to his addresses. She took her father's arm, put down her veil, and did not enter into the conversation of the rest, which was animated and cheerful. This conduct, on her part, gave Horace Grantham much mortification. At one moment he fancied he saw in it an indication of her growing attachment to himself; at another, he construed it into a real indifference, and his anxiety increased daily, for every hour he found himself more irretriev-

ably, more passionately devoted to her, and less incapable of enduring the pain, which a discovery of her sentiments, if not favourable, would entail.

CHAPTER IX.

THE next morning, Mr. Cecil and Horace went to fish in the Traun, some two miles distant. The day was unfavourable—it was exceedingly hot—and they had no sport.

“My dear Horace,” said Mr. Cecil, as, fatigued with their endeavours, which a scorching sun rendered it useless to persevere in till towards the evening, they threw themselves in the shade of some trees, which overhung the bank, and directed the boy in attendance to produce their luncheon from his wallet, “let us enjoy ourselves in this

delightful spot for an hour or two. Not a fish will move till the sun goes down; and Amy and John promised to meet us here at one o'clock."

"They must be here then shortly," replied Horace. "Indeed I think I hear their voices not far distant." They looked around, and soon perceived John Cecil helping his sister to descend from a height above. Horace gazed with admiration at her beautiful figure, and graceful movements, thus brought into full relief, like a sudden apparition before his eyes, as she lightly bounded from crag to crag; or, stooping down, threaded her way through the brushwood, occasionally slipping down the steep acclivity, which rose behind them.

She was attired in a simple muslin dress, and a jacket of cloth, which fitted closely though not tightly, to her figure, and on her head she wore a large straw hat to protect her from the sun, under which her

splendid hair, which she this day wore plain, was bound in thick masses. She was indeed a lovely creature: her countenance was radiant with happiness, her motions buoyant with the health and activity of youth, and Horace did not now notice that deep expression of melancholy, that unaccountable sadness, which had before so often both pained him deeply, and excited his curiosity.

They were now standing on a ledge of rock, apparently undecided whither to bend their steps; and both her father and Horace were alarmed lest she might miss her footing and fall. The former called out to her to remain where she was, which injunction, unfortunately, John Cecil, who was her guide, did not obey—for he, having sprung carefully down on to the sloping and steep bank, with difficulty regained his *aplomb*; and, on looking round, had the mortification to perceive that his sister, in her

endeavour to follow him unassisted, had fallen, and rolled some distance, when her progress had luckily been arrested by a large tree, which she had succeeded in grasping for support.

Horace rushed up the steep towards her. He reached the spot before John Cecil, and gave her his hand, which she accepted with a smile. He then endeavoured to assist her to arise.

“I fear you are hurt, Miss Cecil,” said Horace, in anxious tones; “how foolish of John to bring you down that horrid slope! Tell me you are not hurt?”

Poor Amy tried to speak, but the intense pain she was suffering from her fall, which had been a very severe one, not only shaking her much, but spraining her ankle badly, prevented her utterance. She felt faint, her features were pale, and the tears suffused her eyes, as she gazed at our hero with mixed sensations of gratitude and nervous

anxiety. The former was due to him for his ready help, and the kind sympathy so apparent in his manner, and the solicitous tones of his voice—the latter feeling Amy had lately always experienced in his society.

Horace perceived at a glance that she was much hurt. He called loudly to Mr. Cecil for “water,” who, though now only a few steps from them, on hearing this appeal, turned quickly round, and scrambled towards the river for the purpose of obtaining some. Horace was thus left again alone with Amy for a moment—a moment to both fraught with the deepest interest.

He sat down by her side, begging her to lean on him for support. She did so, thanking him with her eyes, as, unable to speak, she continued to tremble violently from the united effects of the pain she suffered, and the agitation consequent on her near affinity to one, who every hour had become the increasing object of her love, and who now was

necessary, as the air of Heaven, to her happiness and existence.

She afterwards related to Horace, that during those brief periods, when she was suffering agonies of pain, and was nearly insensible, his presence and unmistakable demeanour on the occasion had given her, notwithstanding, extatic feelings of joy, which far more than compensated her for her suffering; "for," she said, "I felt, for the *first time*, certain that I was loved, which thought so tranquillized my mind, and filled my whole being with gratitude, that I neither regretted my accident, nor the severity of my fall."

John Cecil now joined them, and soon after Mr. Cecil appeared with a flask of water, which he poured quickly into a silver cup he always carried about with him.

"Put a few drops of cognac into it," said John.

"Do," added Horace; "she has not quite fainted," for poor Amy welcomed her father with a slight smile.

“Thank God, my dear fellow,” said Mr. Cecil, much affected, as he perceived the situation of his darling child. “Here, love, drink a little, quietly.”

He held the cup to her lips. She drank; and in a few seconds seemed much relieved, and smiled again on the anxious group who were watching breathlessly about her. By degrees she came round, sighed deeply, and rested her head in silence on the shoulder of her father, who had taken her immediately in his arms, and made her position as easy as he could without disturbing her posture; for she uttered a low scream, indicative of pain, when the slightest movement of her body was attempted.

She soon recovered sufficiently to thank them all for their solicitude and kindness, and to explain that, though much shaken, she felt no pain whatever, except in her ankle, which was much sprained, and rendered her quite unable to move without acute suffering.

“Confound you, Master John,” said Mr. Cecil, looking at his son, as he addressed him in a tone of half reproach; “what the deuce were you about? Never mind, my dear boy, an accident is an accident, and I need no telling how sorry you are this one has happened—but, you shall pay the penalty of your carelessness, by instantly running at least three miles, as hard as you can go, for assistance. Off with you, my boy, and do not spare your lungs! Bring the drosky, with all the cushions in the house; some arnica, and call for Madame Le Clerc on your way back.”

John, thus appealed to, approached his sister, kissed her tenderly, and shaking hands with his father (who hit him a tremendous whack with a small stick he held in his hand, as a sort of punishment for his crime, or token of forgiveness), girded up his loins; and was away like a roe-deer, calling aloud, “in an hour the carriage shall be here!”

"I fear, darling," said Mr. Cecil, "that you must remain here till the carriage arrives; and even then, however carefully we carry you, you will suffer some pain in the removal."

"Fortunately," said Horace, "it is not very far to the road."

"No, dear papa," continued Amy, "we had not left it two minutes, when we took that short cut which has proved so unlucky to me, but I feel much better now, almost well. I have no pain, I assure you, except when I move, and now that the faintness has gone off, I am so comfortable that I should like to stay here a long time;" and she looked at Horace, who, with his eyes fixed on her lovely countenance, was drinking in deep draughts of love never to be eradicated; in silent admiration of her glorious beauty and feeling conduct to her beloved father; who displayed, on the occasion, that fond affection, that paternal solicitude, which,

when regarded by a third party, even if disinterested, cannot fail to call forth approbation and acknowledgment, that 'Love,' in whatever shape, when pure and undefiled, is the greatest blessing of our mortal career, the refiner of our harsh natures, and the blessed tie which binds those who do their duty and cultivate its tender progress, in a never-failing bond of holy affection and mutual dependence. Horace now sat down, and the conversation turned naturally on the accident, which Amy explained as follows:—

“You know, dearest papa, how active I am, and John jumped down from the rock at my request. I intended to wait till he was ready to catch me as I sprang, but the movement his weight made, I suppose in the action of springing, caused some portion of the earth and rock, where I was standing, to give way, which forced me to jump, and trust to my own powers; which,” added she,

laughing, "did not prove enough to save me."

"I am very glad Grantham was so near," said her father.

"If he had not been," replied Amy, without looking towards Horace, "I am sure I should have fainted."

She here stopped short, for she felt she had somehow said too much, and knew that Horace was regarding her. She blushed deeply, and continued in a rather confused manner, as follows :—

"For, if somebody had not supported me, I felt so dizzy and unable to keep up, that I should have lost all command over myself, and might have rolled further down that slope we now see before us."

"Ah!" said Mr. Cecil, "you might indeed, my darling. Horace, my dear fellow, I forgot to thank you for your kindness. There is my hand, and believe me, when I say, I feel it deeply."

Horace shook his hand warmly. The honest open-heartedness of Mr. Cecil's manner immediately relieved the awkward sensations both of Horace and Amy Cecil, who felt, indeed, that the short half-hour during which the events related had occurred, had, though no words of love had been spoken, tacitly opened to each other the secrets of their inmost heart, and that now the day of explanation could not be far distant.

The time flew rapidly. Although, in reality, more than an hour had elapsed, it seemed scarcely five minutes to Horace or Amy, when their conversation was interrupted by the well-known tones of John Cecil's voice from above. They looked up, and descried him standing up in the drosky, waving his hand.

Madame Le Clerc was seated by his side in the vehicle. Horace started to assist John and the man-servant in bringing

down some cushions, whilst the old lady was only deterred from venturing down the steep to join Amy, by the information that such a feat was, to her, quite an impossibility as well as useless.

At length, with the assistance of some planks which lay opportunely near them, the cushions and cloaks, the gentlemen managed to make up a sort of couch, on which her father gently lifted Amy.

It caused her less pain than she expected, and, after half-an-hour's hard work, (for owing to the nature of the ground, they could only bear her a few yards at a time), they succeeded in safely landing their charge on the road above.

Madame Le Clerc received her dear young friend with open arms, insisted on hearing the whole story again from Amy herself, and then comforted her by the information that she had three different receipts for the cure of sprained ancles, all of which

were infallible, if the well-known healing powers of the arnica should prove useless.

It was now past five o'clock. The shades of evening threw their tints around; and by the time Amy was comfortably settled in the carriage, close to the side of her old friend, the whole party had regained their spirits, and many a joke, relative to the accident, and John Cecil's speedy flight homewards, enlivened the conversation, causing peals of laughter to resound, and echo through the hollow woods.

The two ladies fully occupied the inside, or rather the body of the open drosky. Only one seat remained vacant, by the side of the driver. It must be confessed that Horace eyed this seat with great affection, but his natural goodness prevailed over his inclinations; he insisted on John Cecil's jumping up, as he must be fatigued from his exertions. The young man would not hear of it, but Mr. Cecil, who had his own

reasons for wishing to detain Horace, settled the question, by saying,

“Yes, now everything is ready, John shall escort them home. We fishermen will follow at our ease, and, I dare say, get safely back without any more adventures.”

His son took the hint, seated himself, and ordering the coachman to drive slowly and pick his way (a very necessary injunction, as the road was by no means good), they took their leave, and were soon out of sight of Mr. Cecil and Horace, who returned to the stream to put up their fishing-tackle. This done, they started homewards.

“Well, Horace, it is well it was no worse,” said Mr. Cecil. “I will allow I was seriously alarmed when that dear girl fell—did she not behave admirably?”

“Yes, indeed,” replied Horace, pleased that the conversation had turned on the object so dear to his heart. “I did not know which to admire the most, Miss Cecil’s

self-possession and anxious care not to alarm us all unnecessarily, or the extreme fortitude with which she bore the pain caused by her fall."

"Ah," said the fond father, "she was always the same, from her childhood her disposition has been angelic, and I verily believe that if it is possible for a human heart to beat independently of itself, it does, though I should not say it, in the breast of Amy Cecil. Yes, my dear Horace, I am rewarded far, far beyond my deserts, in the fond love and dutiful behaviour of both of my children. I do not remember the day they have either of them caused me a moment's uneasiness; and I enjoy, in consequence, in our fallen fortunes, a more perfect happiness, I am convinced, than many a rich and prosperous man of the world, who, though surrounded by all the comforts and luxuries which money can purchase, has, through his want of feeling,

or other circumstances, forfeited the divine privilege of his children's affection and regards."

"I have never told you," continued Mr. Cecil, who seemed in a very communicative mood, "that I was once a rich man, and although you may think me a prudent one I can assure you I was, when young, very much the contrary. Indeed, I owe my present position, in a pecuniary point of view, much, though not entirely, to my own extravagance, and want of caution in the management of my affairs. I married young, and thoughtlessly considered the ample fortune which I succeeded to, as far more than I could spend, much less, that my West India property, which was large and prosperous, wanted my personal attention and *surveillance*.

"In that year, so fatal to West India proprietors, I suffered considerable losses, did not retrench when I should have done so;

difficulties ensued, and three years ago, I found myself obliged to leave London, where we had principally resided, and bury ourselves in Scotland, not far from Glasgow. With my remaining capital, I foolishly embarked in some rail-road speculations—a crash came—I was called on for large sums, as chairman to several companies which were on the brink of insolvency, and found myself one fine morning on the verge of arrest for a large amount, without the possibility of raising a farthing to satisfy the wolf-like demands of the different creditors.

“Fortunately, I succeeded in borrowing a sum of money, which enabled me to pay what was actually necessary, and go abroad.

“Since then, we have lived here in happy retirement, and were it not for the reflection, that I have, through my own folly, robbed them who are far dearer to me than my own existence of ample fortunes, I should enjoy

almost perfect happiness. That thought, Grantham, I confess is a stumbling-block, and a richly-deserved one, to my peace of mind, and, though my dear boy and Amy are quite aware of the circumstances, and are too noble to give me a word or look of reproach, I often, when gazing on their handsome forms, sigh, and curse the hour when I was tempted so far to forget my duty as to speculate with, or carelessly squander property, which, if I now possessed it, would enable me to live in the world, and to bring them out in that society, which they are both formed by nature and education to enjoy and ornament.

“Amy, thank God, is well provided for. She has £10,000, left her by her grandmother, who died when she was a child, and the interest has ever since accumulated. John is going into the army, and I hope by strict economy so far to get my affairs round, as to be able, in a few years, to return to Eng-

land. But this does not satisfy me, though clearly my bounden duty to perform; when I reflect that these are the very years in which my darling girl should appear in the world and enjoy those amusements which are suitable to her age and temperament. It oppresses me the more, as, notwithstanding her noble endeavours to appear perfectly happy, I have, since our residence here, observed with unfeigned sorrow, that she is subject to fits of melancholy, and that the sunny smile of content which previously illumined her features has flown, as if for ever, from her lovely countenance."

Mr. Cecil paused, apparently much affected. Horace was scarcely less so, and for a brief period neither spoke.

At length, the elder gentleman resumed the conversation.

"I know of no other cause to account for this sudden change in my child than the one I have mentioned—namely, that

she, though unwillingly, regrets her position here, and sighs for the gaieties of the world and rational companionship of those of her age and station."

"I cannot believe it, Mr. Cecil," burst forth Horace; "there are other causes, my dear sir, for Miss Cecil's despondency. It is contrary to her nature, to the whole tenour of her disposition, to feel so acutely on so apparently trifling a subject."

"I have often tried to think so, Grantham," gloomily continued Mr. Cecil; "would to God that I could ascertain this, but Amy, when questioned, or even a hint is thrown out by me of my suspicions, is so hurt, and meets me with such heartfelt protestations of her unbounded love, and perfect contentment, that I can never proceed, and leave her half convinced that I am wrong, only to have my fears renewed afresh by repeated indications that something is amiss, that some unknown evil or

spell, some dreadful secret which I cannot fathom, is wearing her away, and rendering the fleeting hours of her youth cheerless and miserable.

"Have you not observed this 'shade of sorrow,' for I can express my meaning no better, in her otherwise happy and angelic tone of mind?"

"I have," said Horace, "and cannot divine the cause; but, as you have honoured me with your confidence, I shall merely repeat that I feel certain you attribute her conduct to a wrong cause, and that time will show I am right in my conjectures."

"I pray God it may be so," added Mr. Cecil, solemnly, "and that if any misfortune has happened to, or menaces my beloved child, He may, in His mercy, remove such from her at His divine pleasure."

"Amen!" thought Horace, though his lips did not move.

By this time they reached the cottage,

and had the satisfaction to hear that Amy was progressing most favourably, though gone to bed, under the kind auspices of dear old Madame Le Clerc, who watched over her with a mother's care, and received, in reward, on her return late to the drawing-room to report on her patient's case, the grateful acknowledgments and unfeigned thanks both of father and son.

It may seem to our readers unnatural that Mr. Cecil, who could not have failed to notice the increasing attachment of Horace to his daughter, should have thus talked of her, and made him a confidant of his affairs, and fears regarding her; but the fact was, that he was by nature so unsuspecting, and had become imperceptibly so fond of Horace, and accustomed to his society, that he forgot on the late occasion, when his feelings were powerfully aroused by the accident to his dear child, their relative position, and ran on without reflection, talking to him as a

friend, who he should have remembered was a lover, and one who, as yet, had made no formal protestation of his regards, or hopes of success.

Horace, on his part, was delighted with this additional proof of Mr. Cecil's attachment and confidence. He retired to bed to muse over the occurrences of the day, his heart beating quick as he remembered the delicious moments he had passed alone with his beloved on the hill-side, confident that in those brief periods, though no words had been spoken, their spirits had joined in comprehension of what was passing within, and that nothing but a favourable opportunity was now wanting for him to throw himself at her feet, and claim her as his own.

Mr. Cecil's conversation had startled him slightly, for though he, with the quick and penetrating eyes of a lover, had remarked that depression, which, it was only too true, as

before noticed, often shaded the countenance of Amy, he had not thought that Mr. Cecil had been aware of it, for before this day the latter had never spoken to him on family matters—much less hinted that he feared for the peace of mind of his darling child.

Horace could in no way account for Amy's conduct. He felt certain that he was beloved, and yet observed that latterly she had often shunned him, with downcast eyes, and, by a sudden turn of conversation, and her movements deferred that which he now resolved to hasten with all speed—a mutual explanation and understanding between them.

CHAPTER X.

AMY was obliged to confine herself to bed for a day or two, during which period she had ample time for reflection. At one moment, her countenance, as she reclined, propped up with pillows, with her French bed drawn near the window, in order that she might enjoy the prospect, indicated gratification and delight. At another, with her gaze fixed on the distant mountains, she seemed buried in thought; soon a convulsive shudder would thrill through every nerve, and the tears start as if uncontrollably from her eye,

It was evident that some hidden causes of deep grief were buried in her breast, which mixed poison with the cup of joy and marred completely the sensations of bliss, which a young lady of her age naturally would have enjoyed, as the conviction slowly but surely forced itself on her, that she was loved by the only man who had ever touched her feelings, and who, she knew, was in every way worthy of that which she indeed had completely surrendered to him—her own pure and youthful heart.

Madame Le Clerc, during the previous month, had noticed with delight the growing attachment of the young people, as the manner in which Amy, although with maidenly reserve, encouraged the attentions of Horace, led her to believe that she had formed an erroneous opinion, as to her *protégé's* previous fortunes, and that the union which she now firmly hoped would take place between Horace and Amy, would

remove from the latter all causes of regret or disappointment.

She had watched them narrowly, and was convinced that they loved deeply; her opinions of Horace were most favourable, and she congratulated herself that her beloved Amy had met with a man who seemed formed in every way, by birth, education, and natural disposition to suit her, although, she was not at all aware of his circumstances, or family affairs.

The old lady was the more anxious on the subject, as she observed that strangely enough, Mr. Cecil did not seem to remark the position of the lovers; or, if he did, he did not notice it to her, which she felt nearly sure he would have done, had he disapproved of the connection, or even fancied that Horace's longer stay might prove fatal in any way to the peace of mind of his beloved daughter.

The scene she had half witnessed, the day

on which the accident befel Amy, coupled with many other indications of an absorbing passion having possessed them both, which she had before noticed, left no doubt in her mind, how matters stood, and she resolved, if possible, during her confinement to her bedroom, to seek Amy's confidence, and congratulate her warmly on her conquest of one, whom she already loved, and considered far superior to most men of his age, both in acquirements and natural character.

With these thoughts working in her brain the kind old lady noiselessly at twilight, on the evening of the day after the accident, entered Amy's apartment. Not a sound was heard ; she therefore considered that her charge was asleep, and, not wishing to disturb her, produced her embroidery, and sat down to work in a corner of the room.

Suddenly she heard a suppressed sob, which forcibly drew her attention. It proceeded from the bed, and was followed by a low,

hysterical wailing and deep sighs, which clearly indicated that poor Amy was not only awake, but was suffering intense mental agony, as she thought unobserved, and alone.

Madame Le Clerc paused irresolutely; deep feelings of pity, and an anxious desire to fathom the causes of the grief of her young friend possessed her. She waited some moments till the paroxysm had passed away, then rose quietly, and gently drew aside the curtains of the bed.

Its lovely occupant was lying on her side; her features were now calm, but the traces of deep suffering were plainly visible on the countenance. Her handkerchief was in her hand, and wet with the tears which had flowed plentifully, and momentarily relieved her.

As her glance met that of the old lady, an expression of agony crossed her features, and, overcome again with her emotions, she turned away, and hid her face in the pillow, sobbing violently.

.

“My dear child—my own Amy!” said Madame Le Clerc, in a kind voice, taking her hand, and kissing it affectionately, “what ails you? I have overheard your griefs, though unintentionally. Come, my darling, make a friend of me; you have nothing to dread. Your sorrows shall be sacred, and you will confide in one who you well know loves you too well to chide, and hopes, by the mercy of God, that she may be enabled to soothe your sufferings, and, at any rate, will consider it a privilege to share your confidence, and use all her endeavours to pacify your mind.”

Poor Amy did not reply—indeed, she *could not*, but she testified her feelings by retaining the old lady’s hand fast within her gentle grasp.

At last she spoke, in a faltering voice, without looking up:—

“I am, indeed, most miserable!” she said;
“I deserve your pity, my dear, kind friend,

but I am most unwilling to obtrude my sorrows on others."

"Say not so, Amy," continued Madame Le Clerc; "compose yourself, my love, and, when you are able, tell me exactly what you please. My experience may be of some avail."

"No, ah, no!" gasped Amy, who seemed on the verge of another hysterical fit as the speaker addressed the last sentence to her! "it is impossible! Ah! I suffer dreadfully, I have been foolish—nay, wicked, and am now paying the penalty of my weakness and ignorance. Ah! it is dreadful!"

Madame Le Clerc was much shocked, for it was now apparent to her that something even more unfortunate than she had previously suspected — some dreadful event which she had never divulged—had occurred in past times to Amy Cecil, for her grief was so real, her whole manner so excited and unnatural, that she could not doubt for

a moment some adequate cause gave rise to the effects she witnessed. That it was somehow connected with Horace, and her love for him, she did not doubt, though how, she was quite at a loss to understand.

Much moved, she took a bottle of eau-de-Cologne which stood on the dressing-table, and bathed the temples of Amy, who at last rewarded her with an affectionate smile, and seemed more quiet and composed.

“Leave me now, for a short time, dear Madame Le Clerc,” she said, “and, when I am better, you shall know my history—at least, as far as I can relate it; for though, in the midst of what might be, alas! almost perfect happiness, the past haunts me like a horrid dream, though it is, I fear, a hideous reality, and a fearful truth.”

“Repose quietly for an hour, my love,” said her companion. “I will return again. Ring your bell, darling, if you should want me. I shall hear it in the garden, where I shall sit down till summoned by you.”

She fondly embraced Amy, and departed. It is the natural construction of the human soul to find relief in the confidential communication of our own sorrows in the bosom of a friend.

Our heroine, when alone, felt suddenly relieved. For two long years this amiable but unfortunate girl, had striven with her inward grief, impelled by a sense of duty, and the knowledge that her position was unalterable. She had bravely succeeded, though, as our readers may recollect, her conduct had not passed entirely unnoticed by her anxious father, by Madame Le Clerc, or by Horace himself.

The poor girl, with her hidden sorrow buried entirely in her own breast, had often been on the point of seeking the confidence of Madame Le Clerc, and, now that the opportunity occurred, she welcomed it with a sense of mental relief, well known to those who, in similar circumstances, have disbur-

thened themselves of some portion at least of the load of misery they endure, by gaining the attentive ear of a true and feeling friend.

She knew, indeed, that the circumstances of the case would prevent a full confession, yet she reflected, that what she could relate would be sufficient to account to Madame Le Clerc for her conduct, and to enable that excellent person to guide her, with her advice for the future, and console her for the past.

All this tended to compose her mind, and when, at the expiration of the hour, Madame Le Clerc entered her room, she was recovered sufficiently to thank the old lady, in affectionate terms, for her kind solicitude, and to assure her that she would, as calmly as she was able, relate the story, which was the cause of her present distress.

“You will not find me a severe judge, my love,” said her friend, seating herself by the bed-side; “so take courage; and I think

it more than probable I shall be able to extricate you from your difficulties."

"No," replied Amy, with a melancholy smile, "that is impossible; it is your guidance which I seek. The past is irrevocable, and, if I can do my duty for the future, it is all I hope and wish for."

"Your happiness, believe me," continued Madame Le Clerc, "depends on your doing so, however hard it may appear, and no doubt is, at the moment in most cases, though our merciful Creator has attached the sweet reward of an approving conscience to those who brave the storm, and, firm in their principles of right, act up to them, in defiance of temptation."

CHAPTER XI.

“You are sufficiently aware of our history to recollect,” began Amy, “that we once were very rich, and that my dear father, on losing the greater part of his fortune through his West India property, resolved to take us to Scotland, and settle there in economical retirement.”

“I do not recollect the particulars. Nor are they of much consequence. The facts were—that, owing, I believe, to some unsuccessful speculations, Mr. Cecil was reduced to the brink of ruin. I had the mortification to see my dear father’s health and

spirits sinking daily under this accumulated load of misfortune. John was absent in Germany; and though my father hid the actual state of affairs as much as possible from me, I had good reason to believe, that unless something occurred to save us, we should be reduced to beggary, and he himself would become the inmate of a prison.

“ We lived about twenty miles from Glasgow, in a small villa we had hired, beautifully situated on the banks of a lake. We had few visitors. My father was constantly absent in Glasgow, engaged in business matters, and as I was then only sixteen, under other circumstances I should not have been unhappy.

“ You know how fondly I love my father,” continued Amy, “ and it was impossible for me to witness his mournful countenance, and to hear the tones of his now altered voice without acute feelings of misery and dread.”

“Mr. Cecil occasionally brought a few friends to stay a day or two with us. Amongst these were a gentleman and his son, whose names I need not mention, to whom my father seemed particularly civil. This conduct, on his part, I could not account for, as neither of them possessed those qualifications which I thought likely to recommend them to his regards.

“The father was an ill-bred and coarse man of business, with a most disagreeable expression of countenance, whilst the son,” and here poor Amy’s voice quivered, “became at once the object of my decided aversion, from his dissipated habits, and ungentlemanlike behaviour.

“They came often, far oftener than was agreeable to me, I assure you, for it was not long before the younger one took an opportunity, without the slightest encouragement on my part, to throw himself at my feet, and declare his passion for me,

which he said was unbounded; and from the vehemence of his language, I was led to believe that there was perhaps some truth in this unexpected, and to me, annoying avowal.

“I was very young, my dear Madame, only sixteen, as I have said, but I had a sufficient sense of my own dignity, and also the conviction that I had in no way brought on myself this unwarrantable insult, at once to refuse to listen to another word. I ordered him from my presence, my cheeks burning with shame and indignation, informing him that if he ever ventured to address me again in a like manner, I would inform my father, who would forbid him the house instantly.

“A malevolent smile crossed the features of this low and despicable wretch as I spoke, for alas, I have since then had ample cause to form a just estimate of his character.

“‘Very well, Miss,’ said he, ‘we shall

see.—You refuse me, as I indeed expected, but do not think so easily to escape me. Perhaps you will not be so proud when your father is carried to jail.'

" 'What do you say,' I half screamed, overcome with terror, 'to jail, what can you know, or what power have you over us?'

" 'More than you think, Miss,' replied he, in a vindictive tone, 'and I am not afraid to use it; as you choose to refuse one of the best matches in Glasgow, just because you are so fine and haughty, but no doubt, like many other girls, you will find out your mistake before long.'

"I could scarcely bring myself to listen longer to this disgusting language, but the sense of danger to my beloved father gave me courage, and I thus addressed him.

" 'Sir, I do not understand you; I have refused your offer, and it is both unmanly and ungentlemanlike to address a young lady of my age, as you continue to do.'

“ ‘Very fine talk, no doubt,’ replied he, ‘and it is your own affair, Miss, more than mine. However!’ added he, with appalling effrontery, ‘you may as well know how things are now as later, for I am resolved to marry you, or you shall take the consequences.’

“ ‘Speak!’ answered I, ‘tell me quickly what you know?’

“ ‘I know this, Miss, that your father is ruined. He has not a shilling at command, and will, before a week is over, be arrested for a large sum. He has appealed in vain for assistance to my father, who is as rich as a Jew, but the old boy (I think this wretch called his own parent) is too knowing to part with his money, and will not do so—*unless*——’

“ ‘*Unless what?*’ I cried, overcome with agitation, and disgusted beyond expression by the words and manner of this vile creature.

“ ‘ Unless Miss Cecil will honour his son with her hand,’ he repeated, bowing low, whilst with blushes of shame, and my heart palpitating with horror, I sank down on a garden-seat close to me.

“ ‘ Sir,’ said I at length, ‘ are you aware of the infamy of your conduct, the impossibility of my ever regarding, save with feelings of aversion, one who thus openly states his dreadful views and dishonourable intentions.’

“ ‘ Not a bit of it,’ replied he, approaching me, and endeavouring to take my hand.

“ ‘ Stand off, sir!’ I exclaimed in a loud tone, ‘ do not approach me, or I will scream for assistance!’

“ ‘ Very well,’ said he, sullenly, ‘ do as you like; you know now how we stand together. Marry me, and I will make you a good husband, and save your father from arrest and ruin. Refuse, and see him dragged to a jail, and incarcerated for life,

for the governor told me this morning he'd never get out again.'

" 'Unfeeling wretch!' said I, 'is this your alternative?'

" 'Yes, certainly,' he answered. 'I am resolved to have the bonniest wife in Scotland; and if I can't have *you* with your own will, I swear I'll have you without, so expect no mercy from me—and what's more, there is no time for delay.'

" 'There is not,' said I, 'but I must have time for reflection,' for I felt at once, no remonstrance could have the slightest effect on this hardened ruffian. 'In three days, you shall hear from me.'

" 'You had better change your mind, Miss, said he, quietly. 'I will now wish you good morning, and will anxiously await your communication.'

" 'Stay,' said I, 'it must be in writing, and also your reply.'

" 'Be it so,' said he, 'your humble ser-

vant,' as taking off his hat, he disappeared through the garden gate, and left me spell-bound, overcome with horror, and totally incapable of sufficiently arranging my ideas to decide on the steps necessary to be taken immediately towards ascertaining the truth of his statements, and the actual position of my father.

"I instantly resolved, however, if they proved correct, not to hesitate a moment. I could not bear to see my father carried to a prison, and disgusted as I was with the proposal of the man, I embraced it as the only alternative which seemed possible to save the former, and restore his fallen fortunes.

"It was of course necessary that my dear father should not have the slightest suspicion of what had occurred. I had therefore to compose myself, difficult as the task was, to meet him at dinner at seven o'clock.

"I partially succeeded—he was alone, in

the dining-room, when I entered the apartment, as I had been obliged to remain in my own room till late, to prepare myself for the interview.

“During the meal he seldom spoke, though he endeavoured to look cheerful; and I observed with dismay that this fatal evening, he was evidently more restless and unhappy than usual, swallowing glass after glass of wine, a thing he was not at all in the habit of doing, as if to drown his thoughts and gain courage for the future. The sight of the misery he endured, nerved my resolution, and braced my mind to enable me to conceal my agitation, and play my part correctly.

“After dinner, we retired to the drawing-room, and I seated myself at the piano; dear papa took up a book, and sat down before the fire; but I soon perceived that he read not, and that his eyes were fixed with a melancholy and vacant expression on the grate.

“ I could bear it no longer, I ceased playing, ran behind papa, put both my arms around his neck, and kissed him.

“ ‘ My dear papa,’ said I, ‘ John is not here ; it is unfair to keep your sorrows from *me*. I see you suffer, and, till I know the cause, I cannot rest in peace.’

“ ‘ Heaven bless you, my darling child,’ said he, ‘ do not worry yourself ; it is only these horrid money matters, which have annoyed me so much of late, and I shall have shortly some heavy payments to make, which I don’t exactly see how I can meet. But, my darling,’ added he more cheerfully, ‘ why bother yourself about it?’

“ ‘ Oh, no, dear papa,’ said I, assuming a look of gaiety, ‘ but why cannot you borrow some money?’

“ ‘ My dear,’ replied he, ‘ that is just what I want to do, and I thought till this morning I had succeeded with old —— , who I have been obliged to have here with his son,

though I don't like either of them, so often lately (and he mentioned the names of the gentlemen I have alluded to); 'but he has turned round on me, and I confess thus rendered my position an extremely awkward one.'

"You can guess, my dear friend, what my feelings were. It was quite apparent that my kind father, in consideration to me, made as light as he could of his misfortunes, and that the story related to me in the garden was but too true. I comforted dear papa as well as I could, and went so far as to ask him the sum which he wished to borrow.

" 'Five thousand pounds,' he replied, 'for which I can give him ample personal security, and I am not without hopes I may yet succeed.'

" 'Yes, my dear father,' I thought, 'you h all indeed ;' and, rejoicing in my own magnanimity, I retired to bed that night

firmly resolved to sacrifice myself to save him, although I determined to insist in my letter to young —— on a period of at least three years elapsing, owing to my extreme youth, before the hated nuptials, which would make me one of the richest and most miserable women in Scotland, should take place —— . I seized a pen, and wrote as follows, directing the note to the house of the elder gentleman in Glasgow :—

“ ‘ SIR,—I accept your proposals on two conditions ; firstly, that your father instantly advances the sum of £5000 to Mr. Cecil, which is, I know, the amount he requires, without any allusion whatever being made to the subject of this communication ; and, secondly, that you agree to wait three years, at the expiration of which period (I shall be scarcely twenty years of age), if your wishes are as at present, I bind myself sacredly to fulfil my promise, and accept your hand.

“ ‘ AMY CECIL.’

“ Having thus performed, what I considered my duty, I retired to rest, not to sleep indeed, but to brood over the events of the day. I felt a calm satisfaction as I reflected, that my beloved father would be released from his difficulties, and foolishly flattered myself, that I might, should —— accept my proposals, train myself, by degrees to look with less horror at the prospect before me, than I did at that moment.

“ The following day I received a reply; it ran thus :—

“ ‘ DEAR MISS CECIL,—

“ ‘ I have seen my father, who has promised secrecy, and will this day advance £5000 to Mr. Cecil. He sends his compliments, and thinks it perfectly right that we should wait three years. I do not think so, and am much disappointed; but as I do not see how things can be managed better, I agree to your proposal, and hope that I

shall gain in your good graces long before that period has elapsed.

“ ‘ Your obedient servant,
——.’ ”

“ As I read this letter, I felt that my fate was sealed, that regrets were unavailing, whilst the long respite I had gained removed my immediate fears, and gave me courage to hope that some unforeseen good fortune might extricate me from my position.”

“ What class of society did these ruffianly people belong to? ” interrupted Madame Le Clerc.

“ My father had told me that they were respectable, very rich, and moved in the first circles in Glasgow,” replied Amy, “ but I had never visited them. Indeed, the mother was either dead or a complete invalid, so that, under any circumstances, I could not have done so. I feel fatigued,

my dear Madame, and must hasten to the end of my sad story.

“That very day, my father, who had been to Glasgow, returned early. He met me in the garden, embraced me with a joyous air, and told me to congratulate him. I threw myself into his arms, and, during those brief moments reaped a rich reward, unmindful of the price I had paid, and thankful to God that I had been accessory in removing from him the weight of distress which had latterly bowed him to the earth, and given myself so much pain and uneasiness. Overcome with emotion, I could not restrain my tears. He kissed me again and again, for I conclude he imagined I wept for joy, and told me he had something to communicate which he thought would delight me.

“‘My dear,’ said he, ‘Mr. —— has advanced me the money we spoke of yesterday. This will enable me to get out of my

present difficulties, and also to carry into execution a plan I have long thought of, namely, to proceed to the continent for some years.' ”

“ These last words thrilled through my frame with a sense of real delight, for by this removal I should escape from the presence of my tormentor, and from a neighbourhood now rendered odious to me by the past occurrences, and the constant dread I should have lived in from the fear of annoyance from his importunities.

“ ‘ Dear papa,’ said I, ‘ you make me really happy. Let us go as soon as convenient to you, and dear John no doubt will join us.’

“ ‘ I propose that he shall do so,’ continued my father, ‘ and I also hope, before many years have elapsed, if fortune befriends me, so far to get my affairs round, as to enable us to return to England.’

“ ‘ Do not talk of that,’ said I joyfully,

only anxious to get away; 'when do you think we can depart?'

" 'There is nothing to detain us beyond a few days, darling,' answered my father. 'In fact, I give you *carte blanche* to make all our arrangements for the journey, and you will find me, as soon as they are ready, at your disposal.'

"I need not relate the particulars. In three days' time we were *en route*, and so precipitately did I hurry on our departure, that I succeeded in escaping, without giving Mr. —— a suspicion of our intentions, and, consequently, we had not another interview. We came straight here, and, my dear friend," said Amy, turning away her head, "you know the rest."

"You need not explain further, my own Amy," resumed Madame Le Clerc, after a pause. "I pity you, my dear child, from the bottom of my heart; I cannot blame you, and it now only remains for us to

hope, and endeavour, if possible, to avert the consequences of your conduct, which, though fraught with misfortune to yourself, I entirely approve of, though it was possible you might have acted differently."

"Oh! say not so," replied Amy, overcome with grief; "the thought that I was forced to act as I did, as the only means of saving my father, has been my chief consolation, through many hours of pain and mental suffering."

"You consider justly, my child," said the old lady, "and, situated as you were, alone and friendless, your conduct was both natural and magnanimous. All I regret is that you had no friend, no female confidant at hand to advise and guide you, before you took the fatal step, that certainly binds you to fulfil an engagement, which, if accomplished, must entail misery on yourself, and deep, deep disappointment to your father and friends."

“But, my love, do not despair; it is fortunate you have confided in me; I think there is yet hope, and in the meantime I shall consider well all you have informed me of, and use all my exertions in your cause.”

“Ah,” said the poor girl, “your words revive me, but I have acted lately foolishly, nay wickedly, and yet, I know not. Spare me further this evening, my kind friend, and in the meantime let me assure you I will be guided for the future entirely by your advice, and act, though it should kill me, according to your wishes, and instructions!

“Bravely said, my child!” continued Madame de Clerc. “I understand your position perfectly, and acknowledge that the circumstances you have been placed in are a powerful excuse for any want of firmness, which can be attributed to you. Still, dearest Amy, there are duties to attend to, and I am certain, from your disposition and character, that should it be necessary for

you to act, you will, however painful the performance of them may be, not shrink from that line of conduct which is honourable and virtuous."

"Never," said the gentle girl, with great fortitude, "though latterly I have felt so weak and irresolute, that I have often dreaded my powers would fail me, and that I should be hurried into the commission of actions, which my better nature shunned, and which I felt would end, if I indulged in them, in misery and despair."

"It shall not be so," firmly replied her friend, "trust in God, my darling. He knows our temptation, the inmost secrets of the heart, and He alone is able to sanctify our griefs, and give us assistance in the hour of need to bear those trials, which He, for wise purposes, inflicts on His children. You must now try to sleep; and whilst on the one hand I bid you not to despair, on the other I caution you to fortify your

mind by prayer to the Most High, to enable you to perform your duty, without murmuring, and, believe me, you will, sooner or later, have your own reward."

"Now, heaven bless you!" continued this estimable person, embracing Amy, who, worn out with her recital, sank back on her couch, and shut her eyes, as if completely overcome, and anxious to court the soothing influence of sleep, that sure refuge for the miserable, and the only means by which many of our fellow creatures gain strength to battle with their destiny, and prepare themselves afresh for the daily duties of existence.

CHAPTER XII.

MADAME LE CLERC watched by Amy's side till she had the satisfaction of perceiving that she slept soundly. She then left her to the care of her attendant, and retired to her own apartment to ponder long and deeply over the strange story she had just heard.

The old lady, most fortunately, was a person in every way qualified to judge as to the merits of the case, and to assist her young friend. She had forborne with great delicacy in making any allusion to Horace, although she knew perfectly well that Amy's

deep passion for him was the immediate cause of her present difficulties and distress, and did not see how, now that the intimacy had been so prolonged, it would be possible to dismiss the former without any explanation, for, after what she had witnessed, she felt certain that Horace's proposals would shortly take place, which circumstance would place Amy in a most painful and disagreeable position, as she must of course refuse his hand.

She regretted deeply that Amy Cecil had not earlier sought her confidence, as then much of the present misery might have been avoided; but, as it was useless to think of that, the old lady set her brain to work to discover the best method of proceeding, without hurting the feelings of either party unnecessarily, keeping in mind the actual necessity of moving with cautious and secret steps, in consequence of Mr. Cecil and his son's entire ignorance, or even suspicion, of the circumstances alluded to.

After mature deliberation, she decided that, if Amy was able to bear it, she would on the following day allude more directly to Horace, ascertain the exact position in which they regarded each other, and advise accordingly. The old lady shed tears of sorrow, when she thought on the unfortunate position of her dear young friend, and hoped most anxiously that something might yet happen—the two years of the period of her engagement had elapsed—to rescue Amy from so unhappy a fate.

She tried to blame her in thought, for the encouragement of Horace (which indeed had not been at all marked, for Amy had struggled, though in vain, against her daily increasing love for him), when the poor girl knew that she was actually engaged to another.

But when she considered the circumstance of that engagement, forced from Amy, as it were, almost on the point of death, and the unavoidable intimacy which

necessarily had ensued between the lovers, owing to their residence together, and the evident support given by Mr. Cecil to the addresses of Horace, she gave her a full pardon, and acknowledged, with a sigh, that it could not have been otherwise, and that now all that remained was, as gently as possible, for the present at least, to sever that tie, which she perceived clearly united her young friends in no ordinary bonds of love and passionate attachment.

She did not come to this conclusion without much pain, for, intimately acquainted as she was with Amy Cecil, and having a thorough knowledge of her character, she feared greatly the result, both for her bodily health and peace of mind, as the former was by no means strong, and the latter had, alas! been already fearfully tried by the constant struggle for composure, and the forced animation of manner, which it had been necessary for her to assume.

The melancholy of Amy was now fully accounted for, and Madame Le Clerc wondered at the success which had crowned her young friend's endeavours so far as to deceive her father, who, the old lady resolved, should (if nothing else intervened to render the communication unnecessary), be informed, at the last moment, of every thing, and thus put another obstacle in the way of the marriage, for she knew Mr. Cecil too well to suppose that he would not rather beg his bread in the streets than thus sacrifice his noble and dearly-loved daughter to the care of a low and evidently worthless ruffian.

She at last, as most people do, argued herself into the belief of what she wished, viz., that, every thing considered—though Amy must, in the first instance, refuse Horace, and it would be expedient that he should depart from the Tyrol, the hated marriage could not, and should not take

place. This idea soothed the benevolent old lady to sleep, and she awoke the next morning more firmly fixed in her opinion, and anxious to bring, if possible, the whole transaction to a favourable termination.

CHAPTER XIII.

DURING the time that Amy Cecil was confined to her room, Horace wandered about with feelings of restless anxiety and uncertainty—although he had no doubt that she loved him, yet he could not feel secure till he had been formally accepted; whilst the communications of her father, coupled with his own observation of her melancholy and occasional peculiar expression, helped to keep him in a feverish state, in which it was difficult to say whether love, doubt, or fear predominated.

As the bulletin from the apartment of the

fair invalid set forth that she could not appear for some days, Horace agreed to start with John Cecil on a fishing excursion for that period, which they had often talked of, and our hero thought this a most favourable opportunity to carry their plan into execution.

Mr. Cecil could not accompany them. They, therefore, packed up the necessary things for an absence of two or three days, and started on foot to E——, accompanied by Hero and an attendant. The weather was favourable, and they resolved to fish the river Traun, up to a certain point—viz., Ischl, from whence they proposed making an excursion over the Dachstein into Styria, and thence returning home.

Horace was not in spirits—his eyes perpetually wandered towards the mountains where Mr. Cecil's abode was situated ; and John Cecil absolutely (though such an event was almost an impossibility) nearly lost his

temper when our hero missed two fine fish through his carelessness and inattention.

They slept at Ischl, that far-famed Bath, and the following day resumed their pedestrian tour, stopping occasionally to endeavour to obtain leave to throw a fly. It is not our intention to describe their trip, merely remarking that they enjoyed it much, and that Horace's spirits rose in proportion, as, on their return, they hourly diminished the space between himself and the object of his every thought.

John Cecil was much amused as he remarked, on the day previously to the one on which they expected to reach home, this sudden change in the countenance of Horace, but he forbore to make any allusion to the subject, for he both loved and respected his sister, and Horace also, far too well to turn them or their proceedings into joke. Of course, he had noticed the state of affairs, and inwardly hoped that Horace would

eventually become his brother-in-law, for he had never met with one whom he would so willingly have welcomed to a still closer intimacy than that which they at present enjoyed.

The following day they agreed to fish a small stream towards home, which had often attracted their observation, but which they had never yet tried

The real friendship which had sprung up between the young sportsman banished all reserve from their communication to each other, and they often talked openly of their family affairs, their past lives, and their prospects for the future. Horace had full opportunity to observe and admire the feelings of his friend regarding Mr. Cecil, which contrasted strangely with his own impulses towards his father.

When he heard John Cecil sing his father's praises, which he never lost an opportunity of doing in his frank and open-hearted way,

the question forcibly presented itself to Horace, whether it might not somehow or other have been his own fault, that he was not in a similar situation, instead of regarding Mr. Grantham as he did, with feelings of almost perfect indifference.

"I shall only regret," said John Cecil, this day, at luncheon, to his friend, "one thing when I get my commission, which I hear will be very shortly, and that is, my separation from my father and dear Amy. But I suppose every young fellow feels the same, and I must put up with it as I best can."

"You are very wrong there, Master John," replied Horace, "as far as my experience goes; there are many sons who prefer greatly to be absent from their relatives; whose fault that may be, I know not, but it is a positive fact, I assure you."

"Well," said John, "I cannot understand it, and surely it is most unnatural."

“An unnatural position, granted,” answered Horace, “but the natural consequence of a father’s neglect of his duties, and of the cultivation of the good-will and affection of his sons.”

“You do not believe, then, in what is called ‘natural affection,’” continued the former.

“In the principle itself being natural, I do,” replied Horace, “and in its asserting its power so far as, in almost all cases, to ensure a certain obedience and respect, but to produce, without cultivation, the proper feelings of love, reverence, and dependance, I deny its influence, and consider that must depend on the conduct and character of the parent, who, as he sows, so must he reap; and cannot expect the dutiful regards of a son whose childhood has been passed in terror, and whose youth has been embittered by useless acts of tyranny and oppression.”

“Surely that is impossible,” said John

Cecil, in reply. "Why, I do assure you, that, as regards myself, the word 'fear' never entered my head in my relation to my father. He is not only my father, but my best friend, the companion of my choice; and, whilst I acknowledge his superiority, and love him deeply for his paternal care of us both, I never feel an approach to constraint in his presence, which is far dearer to me than that of any human being living."

"You are a lucky fellow, John, for I firmly believe what you say; and, though envy is a feeling we should indulge in, I cannot help saying I feel it towards you on this subject, for you know how unfortunately situated I am regarding my own father."

"I do," said John, "and cannot for my life understand how your father could commit so gross a blunder as not to secure your affection and ensure your respect, which, though I say it to you, Horace, I am quite

sure he would have done, had he treated you with kindness and consideration."

"I do not know," answered Horace. "My father gave me what is called a good education, and his advice was always at hand on many subjects, though I confess his mode of giving it was not always pleasant or very complimentary to myself. To be candid, I will allow that I always felt, when in conversation with Mr. Grantham, as if his precepts, though often wise and correct, were self-interested and worldly, entirely independent of any endeavour to make me love him, however much I might be called on to admire the logic of his arguments. In fact, he is a thorough man of the world, and as such, no doubt, would greatly rejoice and consider me a first-rate fellow, if I married an heiress or distinguished myself in any way, by which my pecuniary position would be benefitted; as it is, I fear your humble servant is nothing more than an

impediment to his steps, a useless and unwelcome appendage to the establishment."

"Ye gods, Horace," said John, "I can't fancy it."

"It is true, nevertheless," continued Horace, "and, though I do not believe my father wicked enough to wish me harm, I am perfectly certain that as long as I do not bother him, he does not care what becomes of me, and is satisfied to hear once a year or so that I am in the land of the living, though, till I knew you, friendless and alone."

"My dear Horace," replied his friend, "how happy I am that we formed your acquaintance, and that we suit each other so admirably! There is no mistake about that, I think."

"Well," said Horace, "I do not want to flatter you, but I will say this, that from the moment I met your excellent father at Homburg to the present hour, I have

enjoyed a new state of existence. The reckless nature of my former feelings has entirely disappeared, and I know, indeed, that I now have something to live and hope for, some friends in the wide world who take real interest in my fortunes, and whose kindness, come what may, I can never forget."

"Do not mention it, my good fellow," said his companion, "as we are decidedly gainers by our intimacy, which I trust will never be interrupted."

"Not if I can help it, my boy," answered our hero, whose thoughts reverted to his beloved Amy, encouraged by the manner of John Cecil, who he knew perfectly well was quite aware of their attachment, and understood the allusion, though it was so very slight, to his sister."

"And how does Mr. Grantham treat you regarding money matters, Horace?" asked John Cecil, after a pause, during which

they had lighted their cigars, and stretched themselves lazily on the verdant turf.

“Why, thereby hangs a tale,” replied Horace. “You must know I was born to be a rich man, a driver of chariots, a prince of luxury—but it was not to be—I was disappointed, and my father from that moment redoubled his indifference, and rendered my longer stay under his roof impossible, so that I, with what little money I could get, packed up my kit, and started alone on my travels, little imagining that I should at last bring up in a locality so entirely suited to my tastes as E—— and its environs have proved to be.

“However, Mr. Grantham is very rich, and, no doubt, provided I do not turn a highwayman or felon, will think it respectable and proper to make me his heir; though, owing to his time of life and strong constitution, for he is not more than fifty years of age, I think it quite possible if

not probable, that he will outlive me. One thing is certain, as long as he does live, which I hope sincerely will be to a good old age—I have nothing to hope from him, for, as he says, ‘is not the money mine? and cannot I do what I like with it? This is true, and I almost doubt whether he would to save me from a prison, send me £100, if it necessitated the cutting off a single one of his own comforts or luxuries. All I can do, is to submit to the fate imposed on me, and endeavour to avoid debt, and its consequences, on the paltry income I enjoy, in my own right, from my late grandfather.”

“Am I asking too much,” said Cecil, “if I would be informed what that income is?”

“Not a bit of it,” replied Horace, “we have no secrets: two hundred and fifty pounds per annum, as I was lucky enough to get a mortgage at five per cent for the £5000 the old gentleman left me.”

“And do you really mean to say, that

your father, though in possession of ample means, and a luxurious home, allows you to wander alone, uncared for, whilst he is revelling in luxury, if not in dissipation?" said John.

"I do," replied Horace, "and if you had seen as much of the world as I have, you would be aware that the case is by no means an uncommon one,"

"Well, I dare say I am ignorant enough," continued John Cecil, "but all I can say is, that if being well informed implies a better knowledge of the utter heartlessness, and selfish conduct of worldly people, which you have described—I had rather remain so."

"I am convinced that money has not so much to do with happiness as most people imagine," resumed Horace, changing the subject; "that it is the means of much happiness to the virtuous, one cannot deny, because it enables such people to do good

to others, but as far as the individual goes, unless, indeed, one is entirely devoted to self-indulgence, I do not think more than a competency is either desirable, or necessary. I recollect your father one day, when I told him I was poor and unfortunate, congratulated me, saying, 'I am glad to hear it, you have a better chance of becoming virtuous, and a philosopher, for personal experience alone teaches a man his duty to himself and others, causes him to respect and feel for the miseries of his fellow creatures, and gives him time and opportunity for an investigation of himself, and the real purposes of the Great Creator of the Universe, in allotting him his portion, whatever it may be, in the world we inhabit.' "

"I have often heard my father, who I am sure you will admit is a pattern to us all, though he has been unfortunate himself, express those sentiments," replied John; "and regarding money, though at first

sight the advantage it gives seems invaluable, I have frequently heard him observe that he has enjoyed more happiness during the last two years in our humble cottage, than he ever did before in far better circumstances. However, I don't exactly say I could refuse £5,000 or £10,000 a year, paid quarterly," added he, laughing.

"No," said Horace, "my philosophy I fear would not carry me so far either, but now let us resume our sport—the sun has gone down—and we will try the rapids below the bridge for that fish we lost this morning by our bungling."

"*Allons*," replied John. "The evening is just what one could desire, and I think it certain we shall have some excellent sport."

CHAPTER XIV.

EARLY the day following, Madame Le Clerc was at the bedside of her young friend, and was gratified to find that she had slept well, and was much refreshed; her ankle was all but well, and as Amy expressed a wish to rise, the old lady made no objections, and an hour afterwards they were both seated in the drawing room.

The two young men, as already stated, were absent on a fishing-excursion. Mr. Cecil came in for a moment to congratulate his daughter, who, he remarked, to his sor-

row, looked thin and careworn, and then retired to his own room, as Amy could not yet leave the sofa. Her young charge seemed so much more composed than she had been the preceding day, that Madame Le Clerc soon alluded to their late conversation.

"It is a pity," she began, "my dear child, that you, under the circumstances, were thrown so much in Mr. Grantham's society, yet I do not see how you could have avoided it."

Amy blushed deeply, for this was the first time a direct allusion had been made to her lover, by a third party, but she answered quickly—

"I have indeed great cause, dear Madame, to blame myself, but I have been severely punished, and must now pay the penalty of my conduct. I will only say in my defence, that nothing was premeditated on my part. I did not for a long period, comprehend my own feelings, and when

the truth at last forced itself upon me, alas! it was too late to retract, and the present happiness I enjoy, coupled with a belief that Mr. Grantham returns my affection, blinded me to the future."

"I am certain he loves you, my dearest Amy," said Madame Le Clerc.

"Ah!" said Amy, who did not like the secrets of her inmost heart to be canvassed even by Madame Le Clerc, "the past is irrevocable. I may have been foolish or I may not. What matters it? I know that I am miserable, nay, that my folly may make others so, but, you know my tale—judge accordingly, my kind friend, and assist me to perform my duty."

"Do you consider, my love, that your father has no suspicions whatever of your engagement in Scotland?"

"I am certain he has not, Madame," replied Amy. "God forbid! And, recollect, that you have promised me you do not

mention a word to him without my consent."

"I have, Amy, and will keep my word. It is clear what your conduct for the present must be."

"I perfectly comprehend you," replied Amy, putting her handkerchief to her face, "you will not find me wanting in courage, should the time arrive you allude to."

The ladies felt that they understood each other, and that our hero's fate was thus tacitly sealed. Madame Le Clerc did not fail to observe the natural sensitiveness of Amy, and her objection further to prolong a conversation of so painful, and delicate a nature; she guessed that Horace had not yet proposed to Amy Cecil, but that she expected it, and had resolutely determined, whatever it cost her, to refuse his hand. The old lady regretted that matters had been allowed to go so far, only to be thus frustrated in a moment; she could not,

under the circumstances, but approve of the conduct of her young friend, and did not despair, that as nearly a year had to elapse before the Scotchman, whoever he was, could claim her, that something might occur to change the face of affairs, and free her from her unenviable position.

Madame Le Clerc, however, did not see her way very clearly, and at present occupied her mind with thoughts of how best to serve Amy, without exciting the suspicions of her father as to the truth.

Late that evening, Horace and John Cecil returned from their excursion. They were both in high spirits, having had excellent sport, and were rejoiced to find Amy so nearly recovered. Her brother rushed up to the sofa, and embraced her warmly—whilst Horace approached with a beating heart, and made his solicitous inquiries as to her health. Her voice trembled, as she returned a hasty reply, and looking away

she turned the conversation quickly from herself.

“My dear Amy,” said John, “now you cannot walk far, we must have a picnic on the lake to-morrow. The weather is delicious, and we shall enjoy ourselves beyond description; we can all go—even Madame Le Clerc can manage it.”

“Thank you for putting me last, Monsieur,” said the old lady with a smile, who in reality resolved to go to watch the proceedings of Amy. “I shall certainly join your party with pleasure.”

“Arranged,” said John. “I will be off now to order the boats, and every thing to be ready at three o’clock.” And he seized his hat, and rushed out of the room to carry out his intentions.

Horace and the two ladies were then left alone, the servant entered with lights, and Madame Le Clerc proposed that he should finish reading aloud some poetry

to them, which he had begun before the accident—for she felt that something of the sort was necessary to relieve Amy, whose manner was extremely nervous and agitated.

Amy settled herself so that her features were not visible to any one, and, as he proceeded—for Horace read well—she gazed on his handsome features in silence, forgetting in the delicious reverie which now possessed her, the reality of her position, and the danger of thus indulging in a passion, which was in truth far deeper than she herself imagined.

Mr. Cecil and his son soon after entered the apartment, and after an evening spent in rational and cheerful conversation, they retired early to rest to prepare themselves for the pic-nic, which John informed them was arranged perfectly to his satisfaction for the next day.

CHAPTER XV.

THE following morning at breakfast, the conversation turned naturally upon the proposed pic-nic, and the state of the weather. Mr. Cecil informed them that the glass had fallen, considerably, but his son would not listen a moment to any such allusions. "Look!" cried he, "how gloriously the sun shines! There is not a cloud to be seen."

"Indeed," replied his father, rising and opening the window, "what do you call *that*?" And he pointed with his hand to a

towering mass of heavy clouds, which had collected on the edge of the horizon, and were motionless. The centre of the body was dark, but, with that exception, the whole surface was perfectly white, and the edges presented a fiery and dazzling outline against the clear blue sky.

"I call that a cloud, certainly," replied John.

"Yes, it is a thunder-cloud," replied Mr. Cecil; "we shall have a storm, I am nearly certain, though it is just possible that it may take a contrary direction."

"Let us hope for the best," said Horace, looking at Amy. "I should indeed be sorry if anything occurred to spoil the pic-nic, which Master John has arranged for us with such admirable zeal."

"Yes, Horace, you may well say so," answered John Cecil. "If you look in the hall, you will see a large hamper, already packed, which contains our dinner, some

capital Bavarian beer, and two bottles of the governor's best sherry."

"Hollo!" cried his father, "where did you get the key of the cellar?"

"Ah, there's the rub," replied John. "Madame Le Clerc could never venture on the lake, without some of her favourite wine. Now recollect, we start punctually at twelve," and he left the room to make some further preparations.

"Shall you be able to walk to the lake?" said Horace, addressing Miss Cecil, who looked dispirited and thoughtful. She was seated on the sofa.

"Let me try what I can do," she replied, smiling, extending her hand to Horace, who assisted her to rise. "Now then—gently at first—pray, and she advanced slowly, supported by our hero, who could not resist the temptation thus presented to him, of pressing her hand in a manner at once marked and affectionate. Was it indeed

reality, or only his distempered fancy which caused him to imagine that the pressure was returned; that the fairy fingers trembled nervously in his grasp, and lingered, as if unwilling to be released, at the very moment when he was obliged, as the eyes of the old lady were fixed upon them, to drop her hand?

"I declare," said Madame, "you walk as well as ever, my dear. It will not be necessary to carry you to the lake!"

"My ancle is quite recovered from the sprain," replied Amy. "And, provided the weather holds up, I do not see why our pic-nic should not go off admirably."

"Nor I," said Horace, in a low tone gazing fixedly at Amy. "Let us invoke the Fates, and may they be propitious, for I feel somehow that the destinies of more than one of us are this day to be decided."

Amy Cecil turned away her head, and left the room, for she clearly understood the allusion.

At twelve o'clock, all was ready, and the party proceeded towards the lake. Miss Cecil took her father's arm, Horace escorted Madame Le Clerc, and John superintended the bringing up of the rear-guard, which consisted of himself, Hero, and the man servant, staggering under the weight of the huge hamper already noticed.

The day was intensely hot, not a breath of wind stirred the leaves of the trees, and Mr. Cecil was observed occasionally to look upwards, contemplate the sky for a moment, and then shake his head ominously.

"Do you expect to catch any fish to-day, my boy?" said his father, addressing John Cecil.

"To be sure I do," was the reply, "a breeze will spring up shortly."

"Yes," answered Mr. Cecil, "rather a stronger one than you imagine, I fear; and, as to a fish moving—you have not a chance, I assure you. Have you brought the

cloaks and umbrellas?" continued he, addressing the servant, who replied in the affirmative, as they reached the lake. Madame Le Clerc and Amy embarked immediately, and were followed by the rest.

"Where shall we dine, John?" asked Mr. Cecil.

"On that eminence where we always sit—our favourite spot," he replied; "but here goes for a fish." So saying, he threw his fly on the still water.

"Ha! what was that?" cried he to his father, as a sudden gust of wind swept across the lake. "Is not that a breeze? Hollo! what's the matter! I cannot throw again—the wind cannot have changed thus suddenly!" Such, however, was the case. In one instant, a sort of whistling noise was heard, followed by a violent rush of air, in the contrary direction to the previous one, causing the line and flies to be, as it were,

“taken a-back,” for instead of lighting in the water, John succeeded in fixing them firmly in Madame Le Clerc’s shawl, nearly dragging it from her shoulders.

“Do take care! John,” said Amy, as Horace leant forward, and extricated the old lady from her perilous position.

“Look at those clouds!” exclaimed Mr. Cecil, pointing to the mass which they had observed in the morning. “I fear we cannot escape the coming storm.” At this moment, a distant rumbling sound became audible, and the clouds, which had greatly increased in magnitude and number, were observed to be rolling slowly towards them; a sudden darkness overspread the lake; the wind rose with a wild howl, and then as suddenly fell, every sound being hushed, as if all nature waited, in conscious expectation of the elemental strife, which it was evident would soon commence.

“Let us seek the shelter of the hut,” said

Horace, as several large drops of rain splashed heavily into the boat, "or we shall be too late."

"*Hard all*, then," responded Mr. Cecil, seizing an oar, as Horace assisted Amy to wrap up, and her brother was engaged in putting by his fishing-tackle. They were just in time, and had reached the shelter alluded to, when the storm burst over their heads with fearful violence, and the crazy building they occupied shook and tottered to its base.

"I only hope the 'Haunted Hut' will prove strong enough to resist this attack," remarked Mr. Cecil. "What vivid lightning! Ha, what a crash!" The thunder roared above their heads in one continuous roll, occasionally interrupted by a loud crack, as if some substance had fallen from the sky, and exploded beneath their very feet.

"It is indeed a magnificent, yet awful

sight," observed Amy. "I confess that I am always much alarmed during a storm like this."

"Alarm is scarcely the word," replied her father, "I am always deeply impressed with feelings of dread, awe, and astonishment at these wonderful convulsions of Nature, which remind us (or should do so) forcibly of the immense power of God, and of our own insignificance: such visitations, depend upon it, like everything else which occurs in the arrangement of the universe, have their distinct purposes, both physically, and also as an appeal to the reason and reflective powers of man."

The storm continued to rage with unabated fury, the rain falling in torrents for at least an hour, producing an awful and sublime effect. The "Haunted Hut," afforded the party a secure retreat and they all gazed with mixed feeling of admiration and dread at the prospect thus afforded them.

Madame Le Clerc and Miss Cecil were seated on their camp-stools, in a corner of the hut, whilst the gentlemen stood near the doorway, and reported from time to time on the state of the weather, and the chances of a fine evening for their journey homewards. "I do not see," said John Cecil, why we should go without our dinner, because there is a thunder-storm, a common event enough in these regions."

"Nor I," said Amy—"let us dine in the hut."

"You could not make a better suggestion," added her father, and he directed the servant to unpack the hamper. John Cecil was now all alive—He put up a sort of rough table, constructed of some old boards which lay opportunely near, and in an incredibly short space of time, the cloth was spread upon it, the plates, knives and forks, and glasses laid out, and everything betokened

that they would enjoy a comfortable if not luxurious meal.

"I believe," said Mr. Cecil "that we shall have a fine evening."

"Yes," replied Horace "after a storm comes a calm—or fine weather, which is it?"

"Oh, never mind which," continued John; "let us have our dinner in peace, and talk about the weather afterwards."

Madame Le Clerc assented to this remark, and the attack soon commenced in earnest—so true it is, that, if people are determined to be pleased, and fortify themselves with the necessary stock of patience and good-humour, no trivial disappointments can rob them of that enjoyment, which depends in reality far more upon the individuals themselves, than upon any of the contingencies thus alluded to.

As Mr. Cecil had prognosticated, the

storm passed rapidly away, the thunder reverberating among the distant mountains, with a hollow sound. It was getting late, however, and, by the time dinner was cleared away, during which the gentlemen indulged in a cigar, Mr. Cecil gave the word for home, and, presenting his arm to Madame Le Clerc, they left the hut.

John Cecil determined to remain behind for an hour's fishing, although it was nearly dark—and commenced putting together his rod for the purpose; Horace and Miss Cecil stayed for some time to watch his proceedings, but were soon warned by the increasing darkness that it was time for them also to depart. The moon, which was, nearly full, had just arisen, and the bright stars were distinctly visible in the calm heavens.

“What a delightful air!” said Amy,—
“what a lovely night!”

"It is indeed," replied Horace; "let us depart."

They bid John adieu, and went their way *together*.

CHAPTER XVI.

ALL traces of the storm had now vanished, and the only indication which remained of its having really visited them, was the fact, that the ground was dripping wet. Fortunately, however, the path, which led homewards through the forest, was very hard, and, though a grassy one, it barely received the impression of a footstep. Horace and Amy Cecil lingered far behind their companions. He offered her his arm, which she accepted, and they commenced a conversation, which was evidently con-

strained, and unnatural; for each knew the theme upon which the other's thoughts dwelt, and each was prepared for a scene; an interchange of *words* upon a subject which, as yet, had been sacredly confined within the recesses of their inmost hearts. Amy, timid, yet confiding, scarcely dared to raise her eyes. Horace, having resolved this day to know his fate, nerved himself, and after a long silence thus addressed her:—

“Do you believe in the truthfulness of dreams, Miss Cecil, or rather, do you imagine that they ever prognosticate coming events?”

“Ah! I cannot say,” she replied. “I cannot venture to give an opinion upon such a thing. I *know* that we dream constantly of the persons, (and on those subjects,) who deeply interest us, but that can be easily accounted for.”

“Yes,” replied Horace; “but I do not

allude to that. Have you," he continued, "faith in the prophetic power of dreams? Can they augur good or evil in connexion with those whom we love, or on a subject which deeply occupies the mind?" and he raised his voice slightly, bending his head towards her.

Amy's voice trembled, as she replied, "I have heard so, but I know not. What is your own opinion? for you seem to be strangely interested in the discussion."

"I am so," answered he, in a firm tone, fixing his eyes upon her; "for, last night I was visited by a 'dream,' or more properly speaking a 'vision,' so clearly do I recollect every incident that occurred, nay, the very words which were spoken."

"By whom?" said Amy, quickly interrupting him, and raising her eyes to his.

Our hero had the reply ready on the tip of his tongue, but he checked himself.

"I did not speak myself," continued he,

slackening his pace, "yet words were spoken—words which I shall never forget!

"Is your curiosity now fairly excited, Miss Cecil?"

"Yes," she replied, "it is, and I insist upon your relating your dream to me!"

"I will, upon *one* condition," said Horace Grantham.

"Name it," she answered.

"That you promise me to say whether the words which were spoken, were truthful or deceptive; whether my imagination has not carried me, even in a dream, beyond the bounds of common-sense; and given rise in my heart to feelings, and desires, which may or may not be gratified."

"Have I this power?" asked Amy, earnestly regarding him.

"You have," said Horace quickly. "Miss Cecil, I feel that *you have* acceded to my request."

"I agree," replied she—for she was urged

on by an irresistible power, and scarcely knew how to express herself on the occasion.

THE DREAM.

“Methought,” said Horace, “that I was standing alone on the sea-shore. Behind me, and on either side, lay endless tracts of arid sand, quite flat, as far as the eye could reach. Before me stretched the interminable space of the great ocean, calm as a mirror, whilst the sun was just setting on the verge of the horizon. There was not a breath of wind to stir the vast expanse; not a sail was visible, nor a human being to relieve the dreary, though magnificent solitude of the scene!

“I was clad in the dress of a pilgrim; the materials were of the coarsest description; the hood attached to the garment covered my head; I grasped my staff firmly in both hands, and thus stood, in a stooping

posture, gazing on the waste. My thoughts were of the most sombre description—melancholy and brooding on the past.

“Suddenly, I heard a rustling noise behind me, and turning slowly round, beheld a female figure, clothed like myself, with the features entirely hidden by a mask. The unknown gently touched my arm, and beckoning to me, said, in a voice, the silvery sweetness of which thrilled through my frame, ‘Love makes all things equal.’

“The scene suddenly changed.

“We—for the figure was at my side—both of us attired as described—were in a crowded city; in a part of one more dreadful from poverty and wretchedness, than can well be conceived.

“The houses were of the most filthy description; whilst the living beings we beheld, presented awful specimens of that state, to which misery, dissipation, and disease, reduce God’s creatures.

“The decrepit and half-maniac forms of beldames lay crouching in the dark alleys, shrieking for charity. The emaciated and stunted forms of the young, with that precocity of intellect which misery entails, strongly developed in their sharpened features, were present in vast numbers, whilst the middle-aged of either sex were carelessly employed in the performance of household services, or indulging in conversation of the most violent and intemperate description.

“I was deeply impressed by these painful details. None seemed to observe us, as, arm-in-arm, we slowly traversed this melancholy scene. Not a word was spoken by my companion; but she occasionally pointed with a hand, the snowy whiteness of which seemed to glance in the murky atmosphere through which we moved, as if to draw my attention more forcibly to

some of the most prominent points of observation.

“Suddenly, the scene changed again!

“I awoke, as it were, from a death-like sleep, and looked around. I was alone, attired in a most magnificent dress of cloth of gold, interspersed with precious stones; a girdle, blazing with valuable gems, encircled my waist, and on my head was a crimson cap of rich velvet, bound with ermine, surmounted by a heron’s plume, fastened with a diamond of priceless value.

“The scene before me corresponded, in splendour and beauty, with this sudden change in myself.

“Indeed, I cannot describe the amazement, or the feelings which filled me with an almost supernatural delight!

“The cave wherein I reclined, was lined throughout with a carpet of green moss of the softest kind, whilst before me lay the

most splendid scenes of nature, in every varied form the imagination can conceive. The panorama was vast in extent—the sun shone brightly, tinging the lovely gardens close by, and the fertile fields, and towering mountains in the distance, with a celestial hue!

“In the centre of the landscape, lay a pellucid lake, from whence issued a broad stream of corresponding crystal clearness, which, after slowly meandering through the valley, rolled, at length, majestically calm, past the mouth of the cave. The most beautiful and rare specimens of the feathered tribe flew around, or floated proudly on the silent waters, filling the air with their melodious songs.

“My feelings were above human expression! A vague sensation of perfect happiness seized my brain, whilst my soul seemed steeped in a dreamy languor of voluptuous repose. Suddenly, I remembered that I

was alone. The birds ceased singing, and nature seemed hushed to death. At this instant, the most enchanting sounds, as if of distant music, filled the air. The notes resembled the cadences of an Æolian harp, and penetrated my whole being with an extatic joy! I rose, and fell upon my knees, as if impelled to pray, to adore the Divine Creator of this Paradise!

“I cannot recall my thoughts, I could not speak, but I was soon interrupted by a vision of such enchanting beauty, such un-earthly magnificence, that my senses reeled, whilst no words can ever express the degree of love, admiration, and worship which possessed me!

“The music gradually neared me, and on the turn of the transparent stream, appeared, floating silently on, a boat, composed, it seemed, entirely of a gigantic shell of mother-of-pearl, whose transparent hues quivered in the light, drawn by two immense

swans, that turned their heads majestically from side to side. Reclining in this boat, lay a female form of such surpassing loveliness, such heavenly shape, that no imagination can picture her—a halo, as it were, of divine light surrounded her—her beauty was not human; indescribable yet visible—voluptuous, yet unearthly!!

“ I immediately knew, by some hidden intelligence, that this was my former companion, at which thought an unspeakable delirium seized me! I felt faint with joy, and sank to the earth, overcome by the intensity of my emotions! Can I ever hope, whilst awake, to realize the sensations of delight, of glorious excitement, which possessed me, at this period of my dream, for, when the fairy bark came opposite the mouth of my cave, the swans halted in their course, turned round, and, apparently as if their labours were over, stretched their long necks in the air, and then by turns dived

them slowly beneath the glossy surface of the waters? The figure rose and sprang lightly on the bank, for, spell-bound and breathless, I could not move to assist her.

“This heavenly vision, this incarnation of all that is beautiful, approached me with noiseless steps, filling my senses with her extreme loveliness; warm fragrance seemed to fall from her light dress, her hair was loose, and her divine features glowed with an expression of heavenly love.

“To express the adoration I felt at this moment, would be impossible, or the delirious passion which seized my frame.

“The figure did not speak, but seated herself beside me on the mossy bank.

“Tremblingly and nearer dead than alive, I seized her hand, and looked into her eyes.

“She smiled sweetly, returned the pressure, and drew me gently towards her.

“Alas! even in sleep I was here cheated

out of a further enjoyment of this never-to-be-forgotten scene. All I recollect is that we gazed long and ardently on one another. Neither moved nor spoke. Unspeakable love and incomprehensible joy, compassed us round about; my sensations were so highly wrought, and undefined, as to defy not only description, but even remembrance.

“ Suddenly, the scene changed.

“ The female form, and my own, for I now felt our spirits were eternally united, were together in a vast palace, composed entirely of marble. Our costumes were changed; though, if possible, they were more magnificent than before. We seemed to be walking slowly through the apartments, whilst the same feelings of intense love thrilled through our frames.

“ The immense extent of the building, which was fitted up with Eastern magnificence, astonished me greatly, though nothing could withdraw my regards and

solicitude from the heavenly creature by my side.

“The most luxurious canopies invited our repose; splendid fountains cooled the air; in the spacious halls we traversed; whilst bands of black slaves made their obeisances as we passed, as if anxious to do our slightest bidding.

“Suddenly, we heard the shrill neighing of horses, and immediately two of the slaves entered the hall we were then in, running quickly on the marble floor, and each leading by the bridle, a magnificent, and it seemed to me, immortal courser. They were not black, yet looked so; it was a sort of claret colour, which glittered strangely. Flames, as of fire, proceeded from their nostrils; their shape and condition were perfect, and though bounding with life and energy, they seemed completely under the command of the slaves; who, stopping short, in an instant checked their

career; for they stood motionless beside us. The housings and trappings were entirely of gold; which contrasted splendidly with the colour and the dark tails and manes of these matchless animals.

“My companion motioned me to mount, and sprang lightly herself on the horse nearest to her. I did the same; and the slaves having let go the bridles, we moved slowly on. At first, as we rode close together, in delicious thought (for never as yet had the unknown opened her lips, since the moment I first met her on the sea-shore), clasped hand-in-hand, the noble steeds touching each other; methought my feelings surpassed in intensity of delight those I had experienced in the cave. By degrees the country opened on our view, a glorious scene of water, wood, and mountains of extreme wildness, and entirely unpeopled. On we rode; at first slowly, then we quick-

ened our pace, and as we advanced each moment added to my gratification and astonishment!

“At last, bound close together, we seemed to fly through the air; the same sensation of mingled passion, reverence, and unquenchable love fired my bosom, increasing rapidly, as, confused and speechless, we gazed on each other, sensible alone of the inexplicable ardour of our loves, which, though silence reigned around, did not seem to want expression, to render them more perfect or comprehensible!

“As we thus rushed through the vast expanse of space, somehow we were suddenly dissevered, and my steed flew in advance. We then touched the earth again, and our maddening career continued over a wild and rugged mountain; with no road, nor pathway to guide us through the thick heather which covered the ground.

“At this moment, a vast chasm appeared ahead; a fathomless abyss, dark and interminable! Towards this chasm, I was hurried. A dreadful thrill of agony shot through my frame! I heard a shriek, a voice, the same silvery one that had met my ear on the sea-shore, call out, ‘Beloved, beloved, beware!’

“I strove to check my steed, but was utterly powerless. On, on, with fearful rapidity. I was hurried to the brink, I just turned, and some distance behind saw my angelic companion waving her arms with a look of terror and dismay, apparently rushing after me to certain destruction!

“The scene again changed!

“I lay at full-length motionless, and wounded on the earth, my senses were confused, and all remembrance of what had previously happened in the dream, had vanished from my brain. I was clad in my

usual modern costume, my own horse was feeding by my side, whilst a figure, whose features I never can forget," said Horace, and his voice trembled as he spoke, "bent over me, with speechless affection visible in her dark eyes.

"Was it the same figure, which you have alluded to?" asked Amy, in a low tone of voice.

"No," replied Horace, "strangely enough it was not, but it was the image of one dearer to me by far, than any form merely conjured up by the sleeping brain ever can be, however deeply that form affected me whilst visible—for, notwithstanding the extreme loveliness of the lady of the cave, the palace, and the immortal flight through space, and the adoration I had felt for her, the actual features somehow had escaped my scrutiny—a sort of impenetrable, though light mist had encompassed her

round about; and rendered her, in the enchanting position which I have described, at once the object of my violent passion, and intense curiosity."

"Tell me then, tell me," said Amy, in a voice scarcely audible, "whose were the features, that now appeared watching over you?"

"*Thine*, angel of light," replied Horace, in an impassioned tone, as, carried beyond himself, he stooped suddenly and kissed her forehead.

Amy Cecil, during the period that Horace had been relating his dream, had been lost in a wild delirium of joy and expectation, for with that instinct, which is always the companion of a deep and violent love, she had divined truly that she herself was somehow connected with it, and that the long expected, though by her purposely deferred moment of explanation, was come at last!

For many days, many weeks, she had lost

all controul over herself, and had given way, without further struggling, to her deep, and absorbing passion for Horace, whom she now loved so devotedly, and with such intense adoration, that the avowal which she heard, though expected, could not fail to transport her beyond this world, and grant her for a few brief moments that unearthly happiness, that extatic bliss, which all who have been similarly situated, with her passions, and nature, must have experienced !

At this glorious moment, with the moon shining above them, in the midst of the most splendid scenery, and not a sound audible, save their own low voices, and the distant murmuring of the waters, it seemed to her, romantic by nature, and wound up by the intensity of her own feelings, which were greatly excited, by the impassioned tone in which her lover had related his dream, as if they alone were inhabitants of the globe, that all misery and unhappiness had

vanished from the earth, and that in reality, they were about to visit together some celestial abode of divine love, and magnificence.

Transported with delight, when she felt the light kiss, the first kiss of holy love, touch her throbbing temples, she essayed to move her lips, but in vain, speech was denied her, yet feeling, that some action, some acknowledgement of her love, was both due to Horace, and necessary to relieve her bursting heart, she drew a deep sigh, and threw herself on his breast, whilst the tears, long pent up, rushed like pearls from her humid and expressive eyes?

Horace, for he was a man of violent feelings, and strong impulses, caught her beloved form in his arms, with frantic energy, almost lifted her from the ground, and clasped her to his heart, as thus vanquished, and overcome, Amy Cecil confessed her love. She lay her head on

his shoulder, and Horace leant against a large tree, which now overshadowed them in the full enjoyment of all that superhuman happiness, which cannot be described, but is well known, to those who have had the good fortune thus to love, and be beloved in return by the one single object of their worship, and without whom life, and all its pleasures, would be a worthless blank.

“Oh, glorious moments, immortal seconds of time, never to be forgotten periods of incomprehensible joy! when the senses lose the power of thought for aught but the present, and the conventional modes of life are buried in an absorbing and overwhelming sentiment of mutual love, why are ye so fleeting! why is it impossible to prolong thy existence, or to court ye, oft and again, from the realms above!

“Speak to me, beloved angel,” at last said Horace, in a husky voice, though full of tenderness, “the dream is over, love:

look up, and let me gaze in reality on those blessed features, which were bending over me with such unmistakeable love, when I lay panting and wounded, at the bottom of that fearful precipice—speak—for I awoke before the much loved vision addressed me, and thus assured me she was truly my adored Amy, my everlasting love.”

Amy was completely overcome by her sensations. Her convulsive sobbing continued, though the state of her feelings, and the acknowledgment of her unfeigned, and joyful acceptance of our hero's love, was made sufficiently manifest, by the continued pressure of her fairy hand, which was locked in his, and also by the way in which she clung to him, as if to her natural protector, and dearest friend.

“Horace, dear Horace,” at last she said “there is much misery in store for us.”

“Where! how?” quickly replied Horace, “do we not love?”

“Yes, Horace,” gasped Amy, “yes, alas! how much, you know not, but *that* is it. I cannot say more now. Heaven bless you for your love, dear Horace, for I should have died without it, had you dreamt of deserting me. But I did not expect it. I knew you were too good, of too excellent a nature, to rob me of all my love, and then leave me. But I have indeed been wrong and foolish, very weak, alas!” and here the poor girl hid her head again, and gave way to fresh torrents of grief.

“Beloved,” said Horace, you are now over excited, and must keep very quiet. I cannot conceive the word unhappiness at all, after the knowledge, which we have gained to-night, of our united and fond affection. That consideration alone, let the evil fortunes of this world pursue, will compensate me fully; for have I not the most perfect confidence in thy love, constancy, and affection?”

"Yes, yes," replied Amy, and her frame shook convulsively, "in my love, dear, dear Horace, my deep and ardent love, and affection, but," and her voice became almost inaudible from grief, "you cannot have my hand."

"I CANNOT MARRY YOU!"

The poor girl never once, during this affecting scene, quitted her hold of Horace, who supported, and soothed her, with gentle consideration. Yet, when he heard this unexpected communication, the import of which was clear enough, he started back violently, and in doing so, deranged her position slightly; causing her to raise her head. It was then that the intensity of her passion was fully shown. Her features were pale, her eyes lustrous, and excited, though wet with tears, whilst her hair had become unbound, and was falling in thick masses on her lovely shoulders.

She looked up at her lover, with an im-

ploring expression. Horace understood it as, petrified with her beauty, and proud of the conquest he had made, he seized her again in his arms, their lips met, he folded her in one long embrace, and they thus sealed an irrevocable bond, a passionate agreement of their devoted, and unquenchable love, whatever obstacles might intervene, to bar their union to each other.

It was now getting very late, and they were at least a mile from home. Neither knew how long they had been separated from the rest of the party, so that Horace willingly acquiesced in Amy's proposal, which she now made, to bend their steps towards the cottage.

She took his arm, and in silence they walked rapidly on. Both felt that there was nothing more left them to express in words, and knew that their feelings beat now and for ever in harmonious unison. The walk did Amy good, for she in some

degree, regained her composure. As they neared the cottage, the sound of voices became audible, and on turning into the garden by the wicket gate, the figures of Mr Cecil and his son, and Madame le Clerc became visible; they were seated in the garden chairs, enjoying the beauties of the heavenly night, while John and his father were deep in the discussion of the merits of some particular flies, which they intended to produce on the morrow.

“Well,” said John Cecil, laughing, as they approached the group, “I must say we were beginning to be rather nervous about you both. I was just on the point of setting out to search for you!”

“Half past eleven,” added Mr Cecil, pulling out his watch, as he attentively observed the new comers, and time for all good children to go to bed, is it not, Madame?”

“It is indeed,” replied the old lady.

Neither Amy nor Horace attempted to make any excuses for their absence.

The former went quickly up to her father, who kissed her even more affectionately than usual, as he bade her good night.

"I am rather fatigued, dear Papa," said she, in a calm, low voice, "and shall go to my room."

"God bless you, my dear child," said Mr. Cecil.

As Amy wished Horace good night, she whispered the words, "to-morrow." He pressed her hand. She entered the cottage, and soon after a light was visible from the latticed window of her bed room.

Horace, who did not feel inclined to sleep, in company with John, escorted Madame Le Clerc, across the ravine to her humble dwelling. On their return, the cheerful conversation, and gay spirits of his friend, brought his senses, by degrees, back to their natural balance, and he retired

to rest happy and confident, although disappointed at Amy's rejection of his hand, the mystery of which refusal, and his anxiety for her further explanation, on the following day, kept him awake with a sense of restless inquietude, till the light of early morn shone brightly into his apartment.

CHAPTER XVII.

HORACE Grantham's first thoughts on awaking from sleep, were of a mixed, though pleasing nature. Deeply as he loved himself, the knowledge that that love was returned, was alone sufficient to exalt him to a pitch of hitherto unknown happiness, whilst the fact of Amy's refusal of his hand, he looked on as some mistake or other, which would be easily rectified, but which was still, for the moment, both alarming and unaccountable.

He dressed hastily, and descended to the

breakfast room. Amy Cecil was there, seated at the window. Horace immediately approached her, they shook hands, and an awkward pause ensued, which was broken, luckily for Amy, by the entrance of her brother, for she did not wish at that moment, or in such a place, to make her final explanations to Horace.

After breakfast, Amy went up stairs, and put on her bonnet, saying, on her return, that she intended walking to Madame Le Clerc's cottage. Horace proposed to accompany her, and, in five minutes they were alone, threading their way along the well known, and oft described, though lovely ravine, which separated their residences.

"The remembrance of what passed yesterday, dear Miss Cecil," said Horace, "gives me courage to address you; surely, now, there can be no further secrets between us."

"Would to heaven there were not," replied Amy, nervously; "and strange and unaccountable, as my conduct may appear to you, the fact that there is a secret, and one which cannot be divulged, is the only excuse I have to offer you; as it also is the only consolation I possess myself."

"Do not distress yourself, dearest Amy," said Horace, much touched, for he could not fail to observe how much pain, imparting this intelligence caused her, "I, who love you so deeply, cannot bear to be the cause of adding, though unconsciously, to your sufferings, and sincerely wish, that if, as you say, our marriage is impossible, we had never met; for, will not our separation, dearest, be a cause of everlasting misery to each?"

"Yes, Horace," replied Amy, with a gentle voice, "it is all true, too true, I said yesterday, that there was great misery in store for us, did I not?"

"Yes, dearest, you did," answered Horace, "but I did not understand you; tell me what you can!"

"Alas!" replied she, there is the misfortune. I can tell you nothing; do not ask, Horace, but believe me, there are just and adequate causes for my refusal, as I repeat, for the present, at least, I cannot give you further hopes, and God alone knows whether it will ever be possible."

"We have enjoyed great happiness together," continued Horace, in a slow voice; can there be circumstances which require so great a sacrifice?"

"Yes, there are, unfortunately, answered she, "and, moreover, it is my duty to tell you that you must leave me, or," added the poor girl, with a faltering voice, "I shall not have strength to perform my part."

Horace could not bear to witness her agitation, he took her hand and soothed her by degrees, with words of fond affec-

tion, promising to obey her commands, and whatever it cost him, to tear himself from her presence. She informed him of her resolve to visit Madame Le Clerc, till after his departure, and agreed that she would grant him a last interview. Sorrowfully, they separated, they, who not twenty-four short hours before, overcome with their irresistible passion for each other, had exchanged vows of an everlasting love, the victims, like many others, of circumstances, which, though attributable by the shortsighted, to our good or evil fortunes, are, in reality, the ordinations of a wise and righteous Providence. Thus was Horace Grantham hurled from the summit of the eminence, on which he had, with all the impetuous wildness of his nature, founded his hopes of supreme happiness.

Whilst with Amy, he did not feel the full force of the blow, for he had the satisfaction of receiving in broken words, her

earnest thanks, for his manly acquiescence in her wishes, but when she disappeared, as if for ever, from his view, and he felt the soft pressure of her hand, as she bid him farewell, a sense of such utter desolation, such withering misery, possessed him that he seemed for a moment almost senseless with despair. Till that instant, he somehow had clung to the belief that their separation was impossible, that there could be no reality in so dreadful, and unnatural an idea, but now, the truth was too apparent, and he collected himself, as well he might, to comprehend, and bear the inevitable destiny which was imposed on him.

Miserable, and broken hearted, he wandered far and wide that day, seeking peace, and finding none, in the vain endeavour to tranquilize his mind, by ascertaining the probable causes of his beloved Amy's rejection of his hand, though he felt, and a thrill of delightful hope, for the moment

relieved his oppressed heart, that he possessed her undivided affections.

He resolved at last to submit to his hard fate, to see Mr. Cecil the following day, and make the necessary arrangements for his departure, though whither, he neither knew, or cared, as to him, indeed, the whole world was a wide blank, a dreary waste; his whole soul, the essence of his life being buried securely in the small spot which contained his beloved, the melancholy and unfortunate Amy Cecil.

It must not be supposed that Mr. Cecil had not observed the attachment springing up by degrees, but so apparently, between Horace and his daughter, and latterly it had given him some uneasiness, as he noticed, that although the young people seemed mutually pleased, and deeply in love, the melancholy of his child increased rather than diminished in consequence.

This puzzled and vexed him in no small

degree, he began to blame himself for bringing them into contact, and for want of caution in not foreseeing the almost certain effect, which the constant presence of a young man of Horace's personal qualifications, and mental endowments, would be likely to have on the sensitive, and finely wrought nature of Amy.

He also remembered that, though the elder Mr. Grantham was rich, Horace was on bad terms with him, that he had no profession, and, therefore, in a pecuniary point of view, though he loved Horace almost as he did his son, and would rather have given him his daughter's hand, than to any man he had ever seen, the marriage, if it took place, would, in a worldly sense, be nothing to boast of.

He, therefore, resolved, before matters got worse, to question Horace more closely as to his position with his father, and to ascertain whether he had no prospects inde-

pendantly of him, for Mr. Cecil recollected that Horace had once told him a strange story about his grandfather dying without a will, and the property passing to a stranger, which had struck him as most remarkable, though, at that period, he was not sufficiently intimate with him to make further inquiries.

Mr. Cecil, the reader can easily imagine, was not one of those parents, who seek alone worldly advantages in a matrimonial connection. Though his acquaintance with Horace was short, he saw, and judged rightly, in him, one far above the common herd ; a young man, who, notwithstanding his fate had been unfortunate, his having been neglected by his father and friends, had retained in his character many virtues, the result of a good heart and highly-gifted mind. Still, in a matter of such grave importance, as the marriage of an only and dearly loved daughter, he felt it clearly

his duty to be better acquainted with our hero's position than he was at present, and half regretted that he had silently allowed so long a period to elapse without questioning Horace more closely, as he now feared, that the separation, if it were necessary, might be a cause of deep anguish to his darling child.

END OF VOL. II.

London :

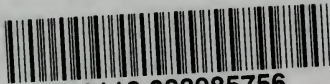
Myers & Co., Printers, 22, Tavistock-s'treet, Covent Garden.



UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS-URBANA

823 H788H C001 v.2

Horace Grantham or The neglected son.



3 0112 088985756